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Ida Amelia

A TRUE STORY CONNECTED WITH THE
MESSENGER FAMILY OF ILLINOIS
(St. Clair County)

by

Estelle Messenger

(Mrs. Frederick C. Harrington)

1940

Author of

"A HISTORY AND GENEALOGY OF THE MESSENGER FAMILY"

Honorary President Missouri Chapter
Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America

National Corresponding Secretary
Women Descendants, Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company

* * *

Dedicated to My Grandchildren

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Presented to
New England Historic Genealogical Society
Esille Messenger Harrington
Sept: 4-1941.



JOHN MESSENGER

IDA AMELIA KIEFHABER

Date of Marriage
December 4th, 1859

"Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations:
Ask thy father, and he will shew thee;
Thy elders, and they will tell thee."

Deut. 32:7

SUE

Where shall I begin my tale? Who will read it? No-one perhaps, but my mischievous little granddaughter Sue, in the far distant years when she has "grown up".

Sue does not call me Grandmother. She calls me "Truedy". One day she asked her Kindergarten teacher if she could bring Truedy to school some day for a visit. The teacher, not being anxious for the care of another child of perhaps unsuitable age, asked: "How old is Truedy?"

The child looked at her in astonishment, and said: "Why, Truedy is my grandmother!"

Sue is now eleven years old. At home, she has her own small bedside radio and she follows all the programs dedicated to children. She has a complete doll-house equipped with all the modern electric contrivances. There are eleven dolls with their attendant appurtenances -- cradles, carriages, sweaters and blankets. Sue rides a bicycle. She goes regularly to the weekly movie. She is learning to swim. She knows where babies come from. She has been up in an airplane. As she sits in the automobile beside her mother, she watches intently as the gears are shifted, the brakes applied. I am quite certain she will drive the car the minute her foot will reach the clutch. In short, my granddaughter is more sophisticated than I was at 20.

During her frequent, ever-welcome overnight visits, when the weary day is over and the time comes to retire, there is always the plea:

"Truedy, please tell me about when you were a little girl."

* * *

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

MATTHEW LYON

Matthew Lyon was one of the "Green Mountain Boys" who stormed Fort Tyconderoga with Ethan Allen at the beginning of the Revolutionary War. He had been born in Dublin, Ireland, and came to America in 1765 at the age of 15, as a "redemptioneer".

By dint of sterling native talent he fought his way to fame and eminence, eventually becoming a member of Congress from Vermont, and later from Kentucky. He was one of the victims convicted under the famous "Alien and Sedition" laws, and fined, but the fine was subsequently remitted by Congress.

Matthew Lyon cast the deciding vote electing Thomas Jefferson president of the United States (1801).

(See "Jefferson and Hamilton" page 506 - by Claude G. Bowers).

He founded the town of Fair Haven, Vermont, in 1783 and emigrated to Kentucky where he founded the town of Eddyville on the Cumberland River (1801).

Matthew Lyon was married twice. His first wife was related by marriage to the Ethan Allen family. His second wife was the daughter of Governor Thomas Chittenden, of Vermont.

His eldest daughter Anne, married John Messenger of Jericho, Vermont, who-- with her family -- joined the Matthew Lyon colony at Eddyville (1801).

* * *

JOHN MESSENGER

The Messenger family remained at Eddyville for two years, then journeyed on up to Illinois which was then a wilderness and a part of Indiana Territory. They settled in what was known as the "American Bottom" near Cahokia.

John Messenger was a surveyor by profession. Matthew Lyon had been elected to represent Kentucky in Congress and he procured for his son-in-law the appointment of "Deputy Surveyor" from the Surveyor General of the United States, to survey the public lands.

In the fall of 1807 the Messenger family moved again and settled about two and one-half miles northeast of Belleville. A number of acres, covered with forest trees and watered by several springs, were selected. A plot of ground on a hill was cleared and a log house erected.

They named this frontier home "Clinton Hill". Again Matthew Lyon secured an appointment for his son-in-law. This time it was from the Postmaster General, Jonathan Meigs, and John Messenger was given permission to keep a Post Office in his home at "Clinton Hill". This was the only Post Office in Illinois outside of Cahokia. Seven years later the town of Belleville was laid out--surveyed by John Messenger--and eventually the Clinton Hill Post Office was abandoned.

John Messenger taught in various early schools and held night classes in his home for married couples. All the furniture was his own handiwork. As the years passed, there were eight children--five sons and three daughters. Of these our story follows, particularly, the fortunes of Elon and Minerva.

John Messenger was speaker of the first General Assembly, meeting in Kaskaskia during October 1818 and again in the early months of 1819. He had been a member of the Indiana Territorial Legislature where he did much to secure the division of Illinois, and he drafted the constitution for this state.

"Illinois was admitted into the union in 1818. The first constitution provided that the seat of government should remain at Kaskaskia until removed by legislative enactment. That instrument made it obligatory upon the Legislature, at its first session, to petition Congress for a grant of not more than four sections of land on which should be erected a town--which should remain the seat of government for twenty years.

"The petition was duly presented and granted, and in accordance with the power allowed by the Constitution, a Board of five Commissioners was appointed to select a site for the new Capitol."

The story is told that "Pope's Bluff" on the Kaskaskia River was the first selection made. But before final negotiations were completed a sudden and unexpected change in decision was made.

The five Commissioners were gathered for a conference one morning at Pope's Bluff, when a lone hunter or trapper--riding an old mule--suddenly appeared on the scene.

A man about forty years old, his face covered with several weeks growth of beard, he was dressed in home-made linsey shirt and breeches, heavy boots and a slouch hat. He stopped in amazement at the sight of this group of well-dressed men, their horses tied to neighboring trees. They hailed the lone hunter with a friendly:

"Good-morning, stranger!"

"Good-morning", he replied, "Be yu huntin' or fish-in'?"

He leisurely dismounted, threw the rein over a nearby limb, stacked his gun against a tree, and silently

offered his new acquaintances a chew of tobacco.

They were gentlemen and each accepted the favor without comment. Then the stranger joined the small company as they sat in the shade of a tree and, thoughtfully chewing his tobacco, he listened quietly while the all important discussion went on regarding the site for the new state Capitol. Finally all agreed that "Pope's Bluff" was the ideal spot--when they were suddenly interrupted:

"Well, neighbors, I can show you a whole lot more 'ideal spot' for a new town for your Capitol about ten miles north o' here where it's a heap higher ground, and right on this here river!"

After some consideration, and recovery from their surprise, the Commissioners agreed to inspect this suggested site before making a final decision. They mounted their horses and, with the stranger on his mule as a guide, they followed him for several hours through the timber and brush. The country was a wilderness. There were no roads and no settlement within twenty miles. At last they reached the location he had designated. The men were so well impressed that negotiations were completed at once. The site of Vandalia was definitely chosen, the future home of the Illinois State Capitol.

It is to be regretted that history did not retain the name of the amiable stranger who so inadvertently changed the selection for this historic spot. We know the story to be true for it has been handed down in the Messenger family, from one generation to another, in explanation as to why so many of the descendants happen to reside in the vicinity of "Pope's Bluff".

John Messenger had been all through that region on his surveying trips. He, and many of his associates, had been given definite information that the capitol would be located at Pope's Bluff. He believed the land would be greatly increased in value, and he took up 500 acres.

But twenty years later the capitol was again moved to Springfield. . . . Vandalia did not flourish and the Messenger property--mostly timber land--lay neglected and uncultivated for fifty years. The Mound Farm was included in this estate.

(Copied from "John Messenger's private manuscripts")

WHEREAS, it is proposed to fix the seat of Government of the State of Illinois on Pope's Bluff on Section 15 in Township 4 North, in Range 1 West of the third principal Meridian after it shall be removed from Kaskaskia.

Now BE IT KNOWN that I will lay out the whole said Section into lots in conjunction with such person as may be appointed on the State into lots,

reserving a handsome public square for the capitol, at least four acres for a penitentiary, at least one acre for the Governor's house and one block of lots for the Great State College, and the remaining lots I will divide equally with the State and make good and sufficient conveyances for them to the State or to such persons as the State may appoint--and to enable me the more effectually to do this I engage to procure a patent for the Section without delay.

It is understood that this proposition is in lieu of the one I made a few days ago.

Nathanial Pope

August 24, 1818

* * *

John Messenger taught all his sons the art of surveying and they took turns accompanying him on his long trips. They went frequently to Cahokia and Kaskaskia and here Elon Messenger fell desperately in love with a girl who was different from any girl he had ever known.

Her name was Rebecca Piggott. She had smiling blue eyes and auburn hair. Her personality has been described as dramatic. Her conversation was interpolated with mimicry and impersonation, unexpected gestures and surprising facial expression. She had a friendly, lively disposition and she loved music and dancing.

The Piggotts were as prominent in their locality as the Messengers were in Ridge Prairie. Rebecca was the granddaughter of Capt. James Piggott who had served in the Revolutionary war under Generals Washington and St. Clair. He was in the battles of Brandywine and Saratoga, and he came west with General Clark. He was put in charge of a Fort (Jefferson) five miles below the mouth of the Ohio River.

"In 1781 a band of 1200 Indians attacked the fort, but fortunately they came in small parties. Had the whole band appeared at one time the white population would have been wiped out. The fort was in the greatest distress and more than half were down sick at the time. Capt. Piggott's wife died and was buried within the fort while the Indians were besieging the outside."

Capt. Piggott and a number of his companions abandoned the fort and made their way to Kaskaskia, where the Captain promptly married a French woman who was already the mother of several of his sons. Capt. Piggott was an intrepid soldier and pioneer, accustomed to his whiskey and fearless in the face of all danger.

He organized a ferry across the Mississippi River at East St. Louis in 1794. This later developed into the "Wiggins Ferry". He built the first house in East St. Louis--of rock--and the street bordering the river still bears his name "Piggott Avenue". He died in 1799.

Capt. Piggott left seven sons. Those of the first wife, born in Connecticut, were Levi, William and Jonas.

Levi was Rebecca's father. He was one of the militia men to whom Congress granted one hundred acres of land for service rendered in the year 1790.

The sons of the second wife, born in Kaskaskia, were James Jr., Joseph, Zachias and Isaac Newton. There were two daughters--Cynthia and Asaneth.

As these seven sons became heads of large families there was a goodly number of Piggotts by 1824--when Elon Messenger first met Rebecca. There were several doctors in the family, and all were popular. They were a gay and lively set. It was whispered there was a prodigal vein and always one black sheep in each generation of the Piggott family.

ELON MESSENGER

Four of the Messenger brothers married and settled in "Ridge Prairie". Elon was the acknowledged leader of the clan. He was taller than the others. His hair and eyes were black. His thrift, industry, intelligence and pleasing personality made him a general favorite.

He married Rebecca Piggott and their farm was at the "Cross Roads" in the Prairie--some three miles from "Clinton Hill".

An atmosphere of friendliness and cheer pervaded their home. Relatives and neighbors were always welcome. Rebecca's family, and her uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins came frequently from Cahokia and East St. Louis. They played the violin and guitar, they rode high-bred horses and they wore stylish clothes.

The Piggott boys considered it a great "lark" to ride over to Ridge Prairie from Cahokia, there to change overalls and rake the hay, shear the sheep, dig the potatoes, or make the apple cider. Rebecca's sisters stayed with her in turn and an eleven-year-old, orphaned ne-

phew--Levi Piggott--was reared to manhood in this hospitable home.

Elon's family liked to come from Clinton Hill. Ten children were born into this home, the eldest son was named "John"--for his grandfather.

MINERVA MESSENGER

Minerva was the sixth child of John and Anne Lyon Messenger, and the second daughter. She was born Sept. 21, 1810. She had a natural talent for nursing from the time she was a young girl. She assisted her mother in preparing home remedies. She cared for her younger brother and sister (Matthew and Pamela Anne) in all their childish ailments. She knew what to do for a chill, for a fever, for the croup, and for all the usual cuts and burns and bruises that occur in the average household.

Minerva was fifteen when her brother Elon was married. She had learned to cook, to knit, and to sew from her exacting sister, Amanda, thirteen years her senior. Every task must be done over and over until the work was perfect. But Minerva liked best to be out of doors. She gathered the wild roots and herbs that her mother prepared for medicinal purposes. She had gradually taken over the care of the garden and she helped Matthew with the stock. Their father was away on surveying trips much of the time. He had given Minerva a horse for her own, and she could ride and shoot as well as her brothers.

Her one great love was her little sister, Pamela Anne, the baby of the family--born 1816.

Minerva made frequent visits at the "Cross Roads". She was more than welcome for there was always a baby--whom she managed like a veteran. She went occasionally to Cahokia with Rebecca's young sisters, and here a romance developed with a young man, Joseph Leach.

Joseph Leach was 25. Minerva was 21. They planned their future with much enthusiasm. These months were

perhaps the happiest of her life. Knowing the disastrous years that were to follow, it is good to know that she did have a period of great happiness. They were married in the spring of 1831 and settled on a cozy little farm on the Bluffs, half-way between Ridge Prairie and East St. Louis.

They were very happy for a year. Then, as the months passed, the young husband's health began to fail. The doctor called it "liver complaint". Clouds were gathering for Minerva.

A little boy was born. They named him "John" for her father. When the child was two years old, Joseph Leach died. Minerva was stunned and bewildered--in a few months there was to be another baby. Elon went immediately to the Bluffs and took charge of her affairs. He was the brother and son to whom all the family turned in every crisis. He advised and assisted her to sell the little farm and return to her father's home at "Clinton Hill". And here her little daughter "Pamelia Anne" was born. She was known as "Annie" so as not to confuse her with Minerva's nineteen year old sister.

TWO YOUNG MEN FROM GERMANY

Belleville was a German settlement from the beginning. Emigrants came from Bavaria, Hanover, Feldhausen, Vedenburg, and many important locations in Germany.

These emigrants were young couples, many with education and good family background, seeking a home where there was more opportunity to get ahead than in the old country.

Here land was cheap and there were various industries where employment could be had for all who cared to work. When a family became settled in Belleville, one of them would write back to Germany to neighbors and relatives--telling of this land of promise. By 1839 the town was thriving with bustling, thrifty Germans.

Many young, single men came over---empty-handed--hoping to get a start in life and, perhaps, send back for a waiting sweetheart.

Two of these latter happened out to Clinton Hill one day in the summer of 1839. They had arrived in Belleville only a few weeks before and had become acquainted on the boat. Both were young, well educated, and each was a younger son of a well-to-do family in Germany. Both were without funds and neither could speak English.

They had been directed to the John Messenger farm. One of them, George P. Lienisch, desired to rent some ground and put in a crop of wheat. He had had some experience on a farm in the old country.

His companion--Julius Kiefhaber--however, knew nothing of country life. He was the son of a banker in Frankfort and had been reared in the city. He was something of an artist. The young men made a favorable impression at Clinton Hill, because of their intelligence and their evident eager desire to learn the language and customs of their adopted country.

John Messenger had recently divided his Homestead between his three younger children--Minerva, Matthew and Pamela Anne. He had deeded a farm to each of his four older sons when they married, and had settled his eldest daughter, Amanda, in a home across the road from Clinton Hill.

Pamela Anne was to have the old house. Minerva and Matthew were each building a little home on their portion of the farm. Before anyone realized what was happening, these two young men from Germany were domiciled with the Messenger family--assisting in the building of the two new houses.

The young men were gallant and gay and industrious. Is it any wonder that a courtship followed?

Julius Kiefhaber instinctively chose the paint brush and his work was cleverly done. In a few months Pamela Anne and George P. Lienisch were engaged to be married. This does not seem incredible. But the fates must have

wept over Minerva when she promised to become the wife of Julius Kiefhaber. For never were two young people more ill-mated.

Minerva was a widow, thirty years old, with two children aged five and seven. Her background was that of the pioneer--of the soil and the timber. She had a practical mind and had experienced great sorrow and disappointment.

Julius Kiefhaber was five years her junior. He was inclined to be a dreamer. He was tall and handsome with blonde curly hair and blue eyes. His hands were soft and white. He read Goethe with a well modulated voice that was very pleasing to the ear. And he was learning to speak English surprisingly quick. He was gentle and generous. He spoke often of his mother and sister--back in Frankfort, Germany.

Matthew married Margaret Ann Gilham in the spring of 1840 and settled on his own place. Pamela Anne and Minerva married a short time later and each began her life in her own home. Their houses were not separated more than 500 feet. A row of prize apple trees divided their property. Each sister was to have the fruit of every other tree.

John Messenger now took his wife, with their favorite furniture and collection of valuable books, and moved into Elon's home. He had built on an extra room for them.

Pamelia Anne and her husband were doing very well as the months went by. Their wheat crop had been a success and the fruit was plentiful.

But Minerva and Julius were not progressing so well. She was obliged to hire a man to do the farm work. For Julius either could not, or would not, learn to plow and harrow, to dig post-holes, to cut down trees, and all the innumerable tasks that are to be done about a farm. He did not know wheat from timothy, and Minerva had become very impatient with his indifference. They had a very serious discussion one morning in the early spring of 1841. Everyone living on the farms was out of doors-

busy and happy in the field and garden.

"It will soon be time to plant the potatoes," said Minerva, "and the garden must be spaded, and all the dead brush cleaned out of the orchard and burned."

Julius laid down his newspaper--which he could now read with fluency.

"Minerva," he said slowly, "I have wanted to ask you for some time. Would you be willing to sell your farm and buy a store in town? I would like that kind of work and I know I could do it well. But I do not like to plow and spade the garden. It blisters my hands."

Minerva was furious. She stormed:

"I have blistered my hands with the spade and the plow more than once in my life, but I did not whine about it. That is farm work and I like it. But it is the man's part to do the plowing. I will never sell this farm. I was born here and I intend to raise my children here. If I should sell this property, which my father has given to me, we would very probably be without a home inside a year."

Julius persisted:

"I realize I should do the work to support you. I believed I could do it, but the more I try the more convinced I am that I shall never be a success on a farm. I understand there are so many things one can do to make money in New Orleans. I would like to try it there. Perhaps you could rent your farm, if you do not want to sell it, and borrow enough money to buy a business there."

Minerva's anger had vanished. She saw before her a discouraged, homesick boy, and she was sorry for him.

"I will tell you what I will do, Julius," she said, "I will give you the money for a ticket to New Orleans if you wish it. You go and see if there is an opportunity there. You will not be any worse off than you were when you reached Belleville. If you can make a home there for me and the children--with your own efforts--I will rent the farm and come to you--as soon as our baby is born."

"Thank you, Minerva," he said huskily. "I believe

that will be best. And if our child is a boy, will you name him 'Julius'? And if it is a girl please name it 'Ida Amelia'. My sister is very beautiful and her name is 'Ida Amelia'."

Minerva smiled a crooked smile:

"No child of mine will ever be beautiful," she said, "but I promise to name the baby 'Ida Amelia' if it is a little girl. And I do wish you success, Julius. I am only sorry that you do not feel that you can stay here."

They talked the matter over with Minerva's father who made no effort to persuade the young husband to stay. He liked Julius Kiefhaber and did not blame him for his lack of enthusiasm for the soil. He believed the young German would be a success if he found employment that was congenial. John Messenger had been associated with young men all his life and he was a good judge of character.

"Every man cannot be a farmer," he said. "Let him try his wings, perhaps he will be a big banker some day."

.....

So Julius Kiefhaber was gone.....gone with Minerva's hundred dollars--to New Orleans--and.....she never saw nor heard from him again!

Her father always believed that Julius Kiefhaber had died with the cholera before he ever reached New Orleans. There was an epidemic of the disease at the time, and in many cases--where a victim died on the boat going down the Mississippi River--the body was dropped into the stream without being identified.

But Minerva always believed that she had been deserted. For the second-time--poor, forlorn Minerva was left without a husband and--she was expecting another baby.

It was well that there was so much to occupy her time and divert her thoughts the following weeks. Pamela Anne had been sick all spring and the family was worried about her. She was expecting a baby too.

Minerva planted her own garden, then stepped through the orchard and planted a garden for her sister, and supervised the young neighbor girl who was helping out. If she had an occasional tiff with her young German brother-in-law, she said nothing about it to his wife. She kept feverishly busy all day long and had no time to dwell on her own troubles.

But after she went to bed at night she would lie and wonder if Julius was dead, as her father insisted. Surely he would have written her as he promised-- if he were living--or, had he taken a freighter at New Orleans and worked his passage home to Germany? Would her baby--like little "Annie" never know a father?

Then, almost before she could realize it--the weeks had passed, the little "Ida Amelia" was born! (June 19, 1841) Minerva had said "No child of mine will ever be beautiful," but when she looked upon this tiny daughter of Julius Kiefhaber's--with his blonde curly hair--she knew there never had been such a perfect baby. Julius's blue eyes smiled up at her and she thanked God for this wonderful gift.

She resolved then and there to dedicate her life to the happiness of this child.

Little Ida Amelia was just 22 days old when Pamela Anne's daughter was born. But Pamela Anne knew nothing about it. She was delirious with fever, and for days her life was despaired of. When the fever left, her brain was clouded and several months passed before she could care for her child.

Minerva, of course, took this baby and nursed and loved it with her own. This child was named "Augusta". There was a beautiful devotion between this aunt and niece that endured through the years.

And now Minerva entered upon a new life. Her sisters and her young brother, Matthew, were her nearest neighbors. Their interests were her interests. There was always a semi-homeless widow, or female relative, who was glad to stay with her. She took great pride in her three

children and determined to give them a comfortable home and an education.

Whenever there was a birth, or a death, or any sickness within a radius of ten miles--Minerva was there, efficient and understanding. She rode a large, gray mare, using a side saddle, and was frequently seen riding homeward at dawn after having sat up all night with a suffering or dying neighbor. On her closet shelf she kept a bolt of ivory cashmere wrapped in a clean muslin bag, from which she fashioned beautiful hand-sewn shrouds.

Minerva was known throughout the Prairie for her shrewdness and scrupulous honesty, and her utter lack of fear. Woe to any man who attempted to take any advantage of her in a business deal. She had been known to use her horse-whip more than once. Nevertheless, she had frequent offers of marriage.

When Julius Kiefhaber had been absent seven years and no word had come from him, Minerva secured a divorce. Her son John, fell a victim to the treacherous bilious fever so prevalent in Illinois pioneer days, and he died at the age of 15. Another tragedy for Minerva. All her hopes had been centered on this son. He was an intelligent, trustworthy, promising boy, already a great help and comfort to his mother. Now he was gone, and in her grief and loneliness she married Jacob Baldorf (1849).

But in less than a year she realized that Mr. Jacob was more of a liability in her life, than an asset. She had no difficulty in convincing him that his departure would be best for all concerned. His enthusiasm was equal to her own.

Minerva's young sister, Pamela Anne, had never been strong after the birth of her first baby. For ten years Minerva watched over her with loving care. Three more children came--then--the dear young sister gave up the struggle--and passed into Eternity.

Although Minerva was three times married, her tombstone bears the following inscription:

"Minerva Messenger"

Born Sept. 21, 1810

Died March 16, 1880

The pathetic career of Minerva's daughter "Annie" can be written in one line:

"She was married at 16, bore ten children, and died aged 35."

Annie's first child, Mary, was taken to Germany by her father to visit her paternal grandparents when she was ten years old. When he returned to America the mother was broken-hearted--for little Mary had been left with the old people across the sea. She grew to womanhood in Germany. She forgot how to speak English. She married, and fifteen years later she was left a widow with six small children.

She determined to return to America--to her father.

But there had long been a step-mother in the home, and this little family from Germany was none too welcome.

In the meantime--Mr. George P. Lienisch who had married Pamela Anne Messenger so long ago, was now a wealthy old gentleman of 75. He had been three times a widower, and had reared three sets of children. Now he offered a home to Mary and her little family.

"They were married and lived happily ever afterward."

* * *

ESTELLE MESSENGER

My Childhood

THE MINERVA MESSENGER PLACE

Looking backward, after sixty years, having lived through the "Eighties" and the "Gay Nineties"--to have seen the astonishing development of the country during this time, and the incredible inventions of the last half-century--it is indeed a restful relaxation to sit down quietly, and remember my own tranquil childhood.

Because this childhood was so very unusual--so different from that of my children and grandchildren--I write this account, with the historic background. There is a strange, sad story connected--now long forgotten.

My earliest recollection is of a little cottage home on a hill, beside an infrequently-traveled country road. The yard was enclosed by a white picket fence. At the foot of the hill, fronting the road, was a large, white frame building known as the "granary". This sheltered bins of wheat and corn, and the loft above was filled with sweet-smelling hay.

A large farm-gate, with long narrow bars, adjoined the granary and through this the teams and wagons passed in and out. A narrow, grassy road wound back some 500 feet to the barn where the team of mules was cared for, and the gentle gray mare, Kate, with the running sore on her forehead.

In one section of the barn the farm implements were kept. And there was a buggy-shed. The cow had her stall, and in the adjoining pasture was a lovely mud-puddle for the pigs to wallow in. There were chickens, geese, ducks and guineas, and a vegetable garden, and an apple orchard with an occasional peach, pear and plum tree. Two prized cherry trees were in the side yard, near the house. And there was a pet dog, "Shep".

This farm was known as the Minerva Messenger Place at Clinton Hill. The little white house was very near the road. Flag-stones, between rows of old fashioned flowers, led from the friendly gate to the small front

porch and continued around the house to the kitchen door.

In the back yard was a clump of fine old trees, walnut, oak and maple. A well-worn path wound down the hill under the trees to a bubbling spring. Here crocks and pans of milk, cream and butter, in a well-covered trough, were kept cool and sweet by the cold, gurgling water. A gourd, used for a drinking cup, hung on a low limb near by. A large, flat stone under an ancient oak made an ideal spot for a playhouse..

Not far from the kitchen door was a huge pile of split stove-wood, behind which was a small out-house covered with morning glories. Near by a large, black iron kettle was placed so a fire could be built beneath it. Here the family washing was done and the lye soap was made, of which there was always a goodly supply on a shelf on the back porch.

Let us enter the house. There were four rooms and a "loft", reached by a narrow, enclosed stairway from the kitchen. The floors were on different levels, each covered with a rag carpet tacked down securely over a thick layer of straw. All the furniture in the house was the handicraft of Grandfather Messenger, made many years before.

In the kitchen were two tall cupboards which held the dishes and cooking utensils. There was a wood stove with a reservoir, a square oak table--with red and white checked cloth--several hickory chairs including a comfortable rocker, and a coal oil lamp. The kitchen was a cheerful spot, always smelling of freshly-baked bread. Here, on Saturday nights came the ritual of the weekly bath in the family washtub.

There were two bedrooms, each having two windows, a chest of drawers and the usual necessary furniture. Pegs were driven along the wall where the clothes were hung, and a tin bowl and pitcher were on a small washstand in the corner.

But the "front room" was the highlight of the house. Here was the brightest rag carpet. Here was a round,

walnut table with the Bible and the plush family album, and a large coal oil lamp with a gaudily painted bird on the shade. A wood heating stove, a large and small rocker (with tidies) and the "company bed" piled high with feather mattress and huge square pillows. These were adorned with starched embroidered "shams", and the gay counterpane of intricate pattern was made by Aunt Minerva before the Civil War.

On a carved, walnut shelf was a limited selection of books: Dickens' "Old Curiosity Shop" and "David Copperfield", "Don Quixote", Will Carleton's Poems, and Appleton's Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Readers.

Filling the space of one side wall, above the bed, hung a Tapestry Picture.

The picture depicts a young and dashing Scotch nobleman and his betrothed. He is carelessly seated on the stone terrace of his castle with his mastiff beside him, his pet falcon on his knee. With a long, scarlet feather he is aimlessly tickling the head of the falcon who flaps his wings with delight at this special attention.

The neglected dog registers wistfulness, and the damsel leans against a pillar, unnoticed, with a jealous pout on her pretty face.

The coloring and matching of threads is so perfect, the clouds in the sky, and the trees are so natural, that even today--the picture is 83 years old--the effect is as bright and clear as when the tapestry was completed in 1857. And it is in its original frame.

There is an unusual photograph of this work in the frontispiece of the "Messenger Genealogy" which has been placed in all the important Genealogical Libraries of New England, Chicago, Springfield, St. Louis and Belleville.

So this beloved picture will be preserved in the archives long after the original has mouldered to dust.

SISTER MAY

Our family, at the time of which I write, the spring of 1882, was "Mamma", "Brother Clarence" and I. Clarence was twelve years old--eight years my senior.

There had been a darling "big sister May" who, for a year and half had taken special charge of me. She washed and dressed me each morning and put me to bed each night. She dressed me in pretty clothes--her own fine needlework. She took such pleasure in curling my blonde hair and taking me to church, to visit her school and her friends.

May was seventeen. A bright, pretty, popular girl always welcomed in the homes of the kindly neighbors and of her many friends in Belleville where she had attended four terms of school. And all seemed very interested in "May's little sister".

But early in December, 1881, I had been sent suddenly to stay for a week with an understanding neighbor. I have a very faint remembrance that the German lady gave me custard pie of which I was very fond. Perhaps the pie was in atonement for the frightful scare I had received from her two boys. They had made a sudden appearance wearing grotesque false-faces. I was in hysterics and my screams caused her to box their ears soundly as she snatched the painted paper faces and stuffed them in the kitchen fire. But I was afraid of those boys for years.

When I was taken home everything was changed. There were only Mamma and Clarence, both silent and sad. I cried for Sister May for a few days. Then, not even hearing her name mentioned by anyone and I being little more than three years old, she faded into oblivion. Dear sister May--only a fragrant memory--how different everything might have been if only you could have been left to us.

LIFE AT THE FARM

There had been no Christmas at our house that year, but as I knew nothing about Christmas I did not miss it.. As I look back across the years I am impressed with the loneliness of my childhood. There were no children for me to play with. Clarence went to school. I considered him a very big boy for he could drive a team hitched to a hay-rake, and he could hitch old Kate to the buggy for mamma when she went to Belleville to take the eggs to the store. Clarence carried water from the spring, he kept the wood-box filled in the kitchen. He fed the pigs and chickens and gathered the eggs. I was always at his heels and he was good humored and kind, but he teased me because my legs were so short.

I had no doll or toys of any kind. I loved to look at the pictures in the story books and I had a wonderful playhouse on the flat stone down by the spring. Odd pieces of broken china, some gayly colored, made lovely furnishings. I did a lot of talking to myself and had a talent for reading the newspaper aloud. I would read anything that was of uppermost interest in my mind.

It seems that mamma was a very attractive widow, forty-one years old, and owned a couple of farms. Of course she had admirers. Looking out of the front window one morning I saw an old gentleman dismounting from a mule which he tied securely to the front hitching post. I called to mamma that someone was coming. She looked out, then grabbed me quickly and retired to the dark bedroom, telling me not to make a sound. Clarence was at school so we were alone in the house.

The old gentleman knocked on the front door repeatedly. Then he went around to the kitchen door. There was a roll of thunder. Mamma again told me to be perfectly quiet. He knocked again but received no answer. A heavy shower came on and he was obliged to sit on the back porch for half an hour until the rain was over. After he had gone and we returned to the kitchen, Mamma said to me:

"Now, Stella, don't you say one word to anyone about Mr. McCullough coming to see us--not even to Clarence--and I will bake some cookies this afternoon."

The following Sunday the three of us went to Cousin Sue Wershing's for dinner. I loved to go to Cousin Sue's. There were three big boys and two girls that were older than I, and they all made a great pet of me. Cousin Sue's husband was a genial, friendly soul and he liked to tease Mamma about her beaux. He would ride me on his foot and sing foolish rhymes about "How could I marry such a pretty girl as you when I got no shirt to put on?"

After dinner all were sitting around visiting and I sat down on the floor with a newspaper and began reading aloud:

"Old Mr. MaTullah he comed to our house on a 'Moose'! Me and Mamma we stayed in the dark and he knocked and he knocked, and Mamma said to me 'Sh-h--keep still', and he went around to the back door and he knocked and he knocked, and Mamma said to me, 'Sh-h--keep still', and it thundered and it rained, and Mr. MaTullah he sat down on the porch, and the 'Moose' got all wet, and Mamma made cookies because I didn't tell!"

Everyone had stopped talking while I read, and looking up when I had finished, I saw them all convulsed with laughter.

EVALINE

I wish I might write a sort of testimonial to Evaline that would go down in history. She held such an important place in my affections all during my childhood, and later, for she lived with us until I was grown. She was a loyal and faithful friend. She was known as the 'queer' character in the neighborhood for she was the 'foolish' one in a family of six sisters.

Evaline had never learned to read and write and she could not count money. She was tall, strong and masculine

in appearance. She never smiled. She was as solemn as a cow. Her eyes were brown, and she wore the wisps of her brown hair in a knot, the size of a walnut, on top of her head. She did not own a corset and she went barefoot in the summer time, except on Sunday. She wore a 'basque' and a long skirt with a wide ruffle. Red was her favorite color. She was about forty.

Evaline cooked and baked and washed and scrubbed for us, and went home to 'Pap's' every Sunday. We never knew, definitely, when she would return for she came and went as she pleased, and she usually wore three dresses to 'save carryin' a bundle'. What mind she had was single-track. For when she got an idea into her head, nothing could change it. Nothing pleased her more than cooking for harvest hands. They praised her pies and her biscuits and she followed the threshing machine from farm to farm, during the harvest season, to help with the cooking. When a traveling tin-peddler happened along she fed him biscuits and buttermilk, and he fleeced her out of every nickle she had. And he did not leave much tinware.

Evaline would become much excited when relating the interview with the tin-peddler. He was 'awful nice' and "awful friendly" and--he seemed to "like me real well".

She had a droll way of pressing her lips together and drawing her chin down on her chest and, as she talked, she would absent-mindedly move against a door jam and scratch her back. Whenever anything happened to vex her in any way, Evaline would stop her work abruptly, don her shoes and her "slat" sunbonnet, and "foot it to Bill's". Our dog, Shep, always followed her. She said she liked to have him along 'for snakes'. Bill was her brother, and her sister, Rhoda, lived nearby in the McNickles cabin.

I mimicked everything Evaline did and said from the beginning. Not from ridicule, for I loved her. It was just that her unusual, odd personality impressed and amused me, and it was a sort of game.

Clarence would frequently have me amuse his friends by telling about "Evaline's tin-peddler". She would lis-

ten very solemnly and then declare:

"Stella always was my favor-ite."

THE BURGLARY

One very warm day in July, 1882, the threshers were busy at our farm from early morning until mid-afternoon. Evaline was in her glory. Her sister, Lucy, came to help with the cooking and there never was such an array of fried chicken, vegetables, pickles, cheese, preserves, biscuits and berry pies.

Clarence carried cold water from the spring to the men and I sat in the shade watching the sheaves of wheat being fed into the thresher, as the separated straw came floating out of the funnel. It was all very fascinating. The hands were all in good humor. Occasionally one would break out in song:

"Old Dan Tucker was a fine old man,
He washed his face in the frying pan!
He combed his hair with a wagon-wheel
And died with the toothache in his heel."

Some of the threshed wheat was stored in the Granary, and some was hauled to the mill. Cousin Dan, who lived nearby, dropped in about supper time with a gallon of strained honey. He was our most loyal friend and Mamma asked him to take her proceeds of the wheat--several hundred dollars--and pay her taxes, as he was making a trip to town the next day.

We were all very tired and went to bed early. Lucy was staying over night. Evaline, as usual, had followed the threshing machine to the next farm to be on hand early in the morning. And Shep went with her. About midnight there was a loud pounding on the front door. Lucy awakened, and going to the door in her nightgown, she called:

"Who's there?"

A strange voice replied:

"We have come for some medicine, will you open the door?"

Lucy opened the door and two men, wearing handkerchief masks, pushed in. One of them said:

"We know the widow has the wheat money and we want it!"

Mamma had hastily dressed herself and she came into the room just then:

"I do not have two dollars in the house," she assured them.

The man hunched his shoulders.

"All right," he said, "suit yourself. We'll search for it."

"Please don't frighten the children," Mamma pleaded.

Clarence awakened and she motioned for him to get dressed and cautioned him to keep quiet. She took me from my bed and held me in her arms as she sat in a rocking chair, the robber having removed the cushion. (I slept soundly through all the disturbance.) Lucy had dressed herself and sat down beside Mamma, and placidly trimmed her finger nails.

We must have made a pathetic little group as the robbers proceeded to ransack the house. They emptied bureau drawers, pulled the cases from the pillows, the mattresses from the beds. They looked in teapots and sugar bowls and behind pictures, even ripping up the carpet, but they found nothing. At last, cursing each other, they went out the door mounted their horses and galloped away. They had no guns and had made no attempt to harm anyone.

Both Lucy and Mamma thought there was something familiar about the movements of one of the men but they could not place him. Several weeks later they read in the paper that a young man in our neighborhood had been arrested for burglary in East St. Louis and remembered instantly that he was one of the hands who had eaten dinner at our house the day of the threshing.

"Well Lucy," said Mamma, "I think I will have to get married--for protection."

MR. THOMAS
(John Joseph Thomas)

During the past year we had had a frequent, welcome visitor. Nearly every Sunday, when the roads were not impassable, Mr. Thomas came out from Belleville to spend the day.

He had a drugstore in town. He was about 65 years old, with a long gray beard and laughing wrinkles around his eyes. He was so big and jolly and he wore such nice clothes, always smelling faintly of agreeable drug store odors.

Clarence and I waited eagerly for his coming. He brought such wonderful presents: Candy--striped green and red and yellow sticks, and the most beautiful picture cards.

He delighted Clarence with a collection of polished Indian flints mounted on a board covered with black velvet, and a box of carnelian marbles. For Mamma he brought fancy bottles of cologne, and Evaline was overwhelmed for days when Mr. Thomas gave her a box of lavender scented soap.

But I think the gift which pleased us all the most was the "St. Nicholas Magazine". Such pictures! Such stories! "Little Lord Fauntleroy"...Mamma would put me to bed at night and then read aloud to Clarence. I would try my best to keep awake, the stories were so thrilling, but I would drift away into the land of sugar plums at the very climax of the tale.

The poet, Longfellow, had just died and there was a long story in the "St. Nicholas" about him--and his picture. I thought he looked just like Mr. Thomas. And he must be like Mr. Thomas too, for the story said Mr. Longfellow loved children and that the children loved him. It said the school children had an armchair made out of a chestnut tree and gave it to Mr. Longfellow on his birthday. The story began:

"He is dead, the sweet musician,
He the sweetest of all singers,"

and Mamma read it so beautifully that I cried because it seemed to me as if we had lost a very dear friend.

Mamma read, and re-read "The Children's Hour" to me, over and over--very slowly and distinctly--until I could repeat the poem perfectly. I was to surprise Mr. Thomas the next Sunday. This was my first recitation, learned when I was four and a half years old....And he gave me fifty cents!

THE WEDDING DRESS

Eliza Clark arrived late one afternoon in October. She had a man drive her out from town, and she brought her sewing machine, a trunk, an umbrella, two handboxes and a large wicker basket with a folding lid containing all her sewing paraphernalia. Evaline, watching the man unload, remarked:

"Look's as if she's aimin' to stay a spell."

(Eliza and Evaline did not get along any too well together.) Eliza had come with the intention of doing some extra sewing, which got under way the very next day. Mamma had exchanged several dozens of eggs at Gaus's store in Belleville for a bolt of bleached muslin, and she had a dress pattern from Hilgard & Detharding's of beautiful, dark brown silk--eighteen yards of it. There were spools of fine white thread, and brown silk thread, and buttons and trimmings, and--Eliza was in unusual good humor for her.

She cut and basted all sorts of underclothing. The garments were for both me and Mamma. Eliza did the machine stitching while Mamma did the buttonholes and the fine needlework. Those were the days of many petticoats with ruffles and flounces, nightgowns with high necks and long sleeves, chemises and drawers, tucked and lace trimmed beyond belief.

Under Eliza's competent fingers the brown silk gradually became a dress of wonder and beauty. The fine

tucking and shirring of the sleeves, the elaborate overskirt with the pleated ruffles, the embroidered collar with the fine ruching, and the buttons! Yes, it was to be Mamma's wedding dress.

The sewing was in full swing. Evaline was as excited and pleased as if it were all being done for her. She assured everyone that she always did say that "Mr. Thomas was a nice feller", and she out-did herself preparing tasty meals. She would take her pan of potatoes or apples, and her paring knife, and sit near the sewing machine where she could watch the shaping of the ruffles and the flounces. Eliza was a staunch Republican, and she liked to talk politics as she sewed:

"I think President Garfield's assassination was what killed Mrs. Lincoln," she said, "brought back all her own tragedy when Abraham Lincoln was shot. Mr. Arthur will never make the president James A. Garfield was, and I doubt if he'll be elected."

Evaline was very solemn.

"Pap always was a Democrat, and I reckon I'll always be a Democrat," she remarked.

Eliza removed several pins from her mouth, and scoffed: "It won't make much difference to the Government whether you're a Democrat or a Fiji Islander!"

Evaline set her pan on the floor abruptly, and a few minutes later she was seen with Shep at her heels--"foot-in' it down the road to Bill's".

Mamma had to finish the dinner.

NEW RELATIONS

The wedding was to be New Year's Eve 1882. Just a quiet, private ceremony at the home of Mr. Thomas' married daughter, where he was living. And they were to stay there during the remainder of the winter because of the severe cold and the very bad condition of the country roads.

Our house was to be closed. Clarence was to continue school and stay with a neighbor who would take Shep and the cow, and who would look after the livestock and the chickens. Evaline was going home to "Pap's". It was all very bewildering to me!

A few days before Thanksgiving Mamma packed all my clothes in a valise and took me on the train to "Patoka" where I was to visit Aunt Prudy and Uncle Harve. They lived seven miles from Patoka. Mamma stayed two days and then returned home, leaving me with my unknown relatives.

Their house was very small. Only two rooms, but everything shining clean. In a few weeks there was a baby boy whom I rocked in a cradle that Uncle Harve had made from a big log. It was a severe winter and, for a time, I was very lonely and homesick. But I loved the baby and my uncle and aunt were very kind to me. Every night Aunt Prudy sat in a rocking chair, took me on her lap and sang "Darling Nellie Gray" until I went to sleep. Uncle Harve came home from Patoka one day in March 1883 and he handed a letter to Aunt Prudy. She read it and then said rather sadly:

"Stella, your mamma is coming!"

There never was such a happy little girl. Mamma was coming to take me home! I was going to see Clarence, to see Evaline--and Mr. Thomas (it had been a long time since I had any beautiful yellow stick candy) and I was going to be with my own darling Mamma again. I could hardly wait to see her.

In a few days she came, wearing new clothes and looking so happy, and she was so pretty. She took me in her arms and held me as if she would never let me go. We both cried with happiness.

Later, Aunt Prudy busied herself preparing a dinner of fried sausage, sweet potatoes and apple dumplings. I sat on the floor and rocked my baby cousin, for the last time, in his log cradle. Mamma sat talking to Uncle Harve. The conversation was over my head and I paid little attention. I could think only of going home. Then

I heard Uncle Harve say:

"Won't you spend the night with us?"
and Mamma replied:

"No, we will stay at the 'Mound' tonight. Mr. Belcher brought me out from Patoka this morning and he will take us back tomorrow. We will stop over in Vandalia two days so Stella can see her grandfather, then we must hurry home. We returned to the farm only last week and there is so much to do at this season of the year."

Uncle Harve remarked: "Prudy and I have come to think a mighty lot of Mattie's little girl. She looks a lot like your own daughter did, don't she?"

"Yes," Mamma replied rather sadly, "They were much alike--both in looks and disposition--both like their father, and the Piggotts."

Uncle Harve seemed to hesitate:

"Are you aimin' to take her to see her brother?"

Mamma looked startled. "Oh, no," she said quickly, "not until she is older. You have not said anything about him to her, have you?"

"No," drawled Uncle Harve, "but I doubt and the little feller had been well enough, he'd a-hoofed it up here. He knew she was here. I understand he has been sick all winter. Malaria."

Here Aunt Prudy called us to dinner. I had almost fallen asleep with the baby. I wondered idly who it was that looked like the Piggotts. I was glad it was not my brother that was sick with Malaria. What Grandfather lived in Vandalia? I had never heard of him before. Indeed, there was so much I didn't know!

Aunt Prudy passed the cornbread, and said--as if continuing a conversation:

"She is such a dear child and we would love to keep her, but of course we know that you can do so much for her."

Mamma seemed anxious to change the subject, saying:

"Oh, I couldn't bear to leave her any longer. I do appreciate your keeping her for me all winter, and thank

you for taking such nice care of her hair. May was always so proud of it."

Soon after dinner I was made ready to leave my dear Aunt Prudy and Uncle Harve, and the darling baby, Omer. Mamma had brought me a new dress, a pair of new shoes and red silk stockings that she had knit during the winter. So I felt very important as I took her hand and we walked across the pasture to the "Mound Farm".

The sun was setting. The boys were driving home the cows. The house stood on the top of a high hill, and from here there was a splendid view of the surrounding country. Hence the name, "The Mound".

Mr. Belcher met us at the front door with a hearty welcome: "Come in! Come in! Well, well, the little lady has come home!" Then he looked at Mamma who had sudden tears in her eyes, and he hastily called his wife who was busy in the kitchen.

She had a very bountiful supper and all gave me very special attention. Mrs. Belcher pinned a clean towel around my neck so I would not soil my pretty dress. They admired my curls and my red silk stockings. The three bashful boys sat on a wooden bench and smiled at me across the table. Mrs. Belcher said:

"My, my, how I wish we had a little girl!"

Again the conversation was beyond my comprehension. I was tired and sleepy and was put to bed early. I slept soundly until the next morning. But little did I dream that I had been born in that house just five years before, and that I was a joint owner of the "Mound Farm".

Mr. Belcher hitched up his team the next morning and took us to Patoka. The roads were very muddy. We took the train for Vandalia, and where do you suppose my grandfather lived? Yes Mam. At the Jail! He was in politics at the time and was sheriff of Fayette Co. He had very comfortable living quarters at the rear of the building. There were two young ladies in the family whom I learned were my "Aunt Day" and "Aunt Fanny". They immediately took me in charge and, as usual, I had a grand time.

CEC

My grandfather was a very busy man. I saw him only a few minutes when he met us at the train. I was surprised that he looked so young. He was gone when I got up in the morning, and he did not get home until after I had been put to bed at night.

A prisoner had escaped and they were scouring the county for him. He was finally captured and returned to the jail. He was a very gay young man, about 22 years old.

Aunt Fanny took me with her when she carried his dinner to him. As she slipped the pan of food under the steel bar, she asked: "Why did you run away?"

"Promised to take my girl to a dance," he jeered, "couldn't disappoint her!" Then, seeing me peeping from behind Aunt Fanny, he winked at me and said:

"Golly, you're the purtiest little gal I ever seen!"

On the strength of this my aunts took me out that afternoon and had my picture taken.

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THE MILEY PLACE

Our family was all reunited. Mr. Thomas was now "Father" to Clarence and me. He brought me a little "McGuffy" primer (which I still treasure) and my education was begun. Clarence was raising several species of prize pigeons which were a source of never-ending interest. But the traveling back and forth, each day to the drug store, proved to be too much for Father and when winter came he again remained in town during the week and came home Saturday night.

During the long, winter evenings Mamma read Dickens to us. I, snugly tucked in bed, Evaline seated behind the stove tacking carpet-rags, and Mamma and Clarence beside the table with the big coal oil lamp. How I cried over "Little Nell" and laughed over "Mr. Dick". The chapter was finished. Evaline wound her carpet-rags into a ball, and remarked:

"Pap said Mr. Dickens was here in Belleville once and he went home and writ a book about it. Reckon he writ a whole book about the mud. He coulda went right past this house. Reckon he did. The road's all right when it don't rain--or thaw. Pap said Mr. Dickens coulda stayed home--just well as not. I went to Belleville once to the County Fair. They had such nice pies an' butter, an' quilts. Pigs too! I think Belleville is an awful nice town. So does Pap."

"Well, Evaline," said Mamma, "it has been more than forty years since Mr. Dickens visited Belleville and there have been many improvements since then."

Evaline scratched her back. "Pap never did like Dickens," she said, "an' I reckon I won't never like Dickens."

Mamma took the time and patience that winter (1883-4) to teach me several long poems: Whittier's "Maud Muller" and Will Carleton's "Betsy and I are out" and "Over the Hill to the Poor house". She had learned that it was not difficult for me to memorize just by listening to her repetition of the words, over and over...over and over. Father was always interested and pleased with my progress, and when I could recite a poem perfectly he gave me a special present. Occasionally I went to school with Clarence on Friday afternoons, dressed in my prettiest clothes and "spoke a piece".

Mamma and Father now began talking about selling the farm and moving nearer Belleville. He had been born and reared on a farm in Shiloh Valley, and he understood all about the cultivation of all kinds of fruit and berries. He was getting old and would like to give up the drug store and be at home every day. A nice fruit farm would be employment for Clarence when he grew older.

They selected the "Miley Place" on the Lebanon toll-road which was a mile nearer town, and in January, 1885, the change was made.

Our new home was also on a hill. The house was on a level with the road, and the ground sloped downward to the pasture, to the field and the woods beyond. There

was no fence here, but many fine old trees in the yard, and a brick path leading from the road, between two large cedar trees, to the front door. The branches of a giant elm spread across the road, and farmers, driving to town in the summer, would stop here to rest their teams in the shade.

In the back yard was a well with two oaken buckets on a chain which were lowered over a pulley by a windlass. There was a big barn with a cupola, a smoke-house and several outbuilding.

The eight-room, red brick house with a Mansard roof set back some fifty feet from the road. There was a hall, both upstairs and down, running the full length of the house with two rooms on either side. The upstairs rooms had dormer windows. There was a side drive lined by a row of maple trees.

The moving was an exciting experience. Father and Cousin Dan went over the day before with a load of furniture. They put up stoves and made a fire. They tacked down carpets and placed the Tapestry picture where it was to hang for twenty years.

Mamma and Evaline had packed dishes and canned fruit in separate barrels. On the morning of moving day, Evaline went with the first load--to build the fires and to be on hand to superintend everything. Several trips were required. One trip was just to move the garden tools and several coops of cackling chickens and cooing pigeons.

I had been shut in all winter, first with the Measles and then with the Whooping Cough, so I was required to stay in the warm kitchen until Clarence came from school. The kitchen stove and several pieces of the old home-made furniture were to be moved the next day to the McNickles cabin. Mamma gave them to Evaline's sister. Our team of mules had been sold with the farm. When Clarence came, they tied the cow to the back of the buggy. Old Kate was all hitched and ready to go.

Father had already gone with Cousin Dan on the last load. I was wrapped up snugly and seated between Clarence and Mamma.

Then we moved slowly over the frozen road, through the snow, the old cow bawling, my adored brother beside me--to our new home, the "Miley Place".

When we entered the house Evaline was busy preparing supper. She had the dishes all unpacked and everything in order. She was very excited and pleased about the new kitchen stove. There was one bedroom downstairs, and there was a parlor! Father had bought a Brussels carpet with yellow roses on it.

There was a new heating stove, and a horsehair sofa with chairs to match. There was the Tapestry picture, the familiar rocking chairs, the walnut table with the Bible and the family album, and the lamp with the painted bird on the shade.

And over in the corner was a "Parlor Organ" which the Mileys had left in the house.

FATHER'S GRAND-CHILDREN

Clarence started to his new school immediately--the "Whiteside School". I was not quite seven and should have been in school before this, but because of my whooping cough, did not get started until the following fall.

Our dog, Shep, did not like his new home. He was something of a rover and kept running back to the old place, finally staying permanently with Cousin Dan.

Mamma and father began studying nursery catalogues. They ordered trees and plants by the hundred. One hillside was to be prize peaches, another all plums, another apples of several varieties. There was to be a big bed of strawberries. One acre was to be set in grapes, currants, raspberries and gooseberries, another acre for asparagus, celery, pole lima beans, sweet potatoes, water-melons, cantaloupes and tomatoes. We had a hired hand. Father went to the drug store every day.

Clarence took me out to the barn one morning in March and there was the darlingest baby colt. It had

such long legs and was so wobbly. And it was gray just like old Kate. We named it "Tam-O-Shanter".

Father's married daughter and her husband were now "Aunt Lucy" and "Uncle Harry" (Powell) to us. They had three small children: Lawrence - aged 8, Margaret - aged 5 and baby William. Father also had a married son, "Uncle Jim". His wife was "Aunt Hattie". They had two little boys - John and Garland, aged 4 and 2. "Uncle Jim" was editor of the "Belleville Advocate". He was a graduate of McKendree College at Lebanon and had met Aunt Hattie there.

Father had another son, John, who was unmarried and who lived with "Uncle Jim". He rode a bicycle with one very large front wheel and a very small back wheel.

They had a horse and phaeton and drove out often to see us. These were the first children I had ever been associated with and I was so excited and happy whenever they came. We had a big swing in the front yard. We loved to watch the pigeons and guineas, and Tam-o-shanter, to hunt the eggs and romp all over the farm. Lawrence climbed to the cupola of the barn and claimed it as his "domain". Margaret was nearly two years younger than I but she was tall for her age and we wore the same size clothes. When Aunt Lucy made a new dress for Margaret, she made one just like it for me, and Mamma knit silk stockings for us both.

It was an "event" for me when I could visit them in town and stay over night. Little girls wore lace-trimmed, white aprons then - with a wide sash. Mamma would teach me a separate poem to recite to each of the children, and she would make two new white aprons so I could take one to Margaret.

Those were very happy days.

* * *

THE WHITESIDE SCHOOL

The Whiteside School was only half a mile from our home. It was a "Little Red School House" - one room with three windows on either side. The teacher's desk and chair were on a small platform at one end, and a large, rusty heating-stove surrounded by a sheet-iron screen, occupied the middle of the room.

The desks had a seat attached and were fastened to the floor. The boys sat on one side of the room, the girls on the other - two in each seat. There was a coat closet for the boys and one for the girls. A bucket of water and tin dipper was on a wooden bench by the door. There were blackboards and maps hung on the wall between the windows. In one corner, near the teacher's desk, was a tall book-case with glass doors. Each child was required to buy his own books, pencils, pens, ink and copy books.

The school yard was triangle in shape. There were several large trees, two outhouses and a coal shed.

Clarence was 15 now and I was 7. He had grown so much the past year--he was taller than Mamma. On the first of September 1885 I began my school career. Mamma curled my hair, which hung to my waist, and dressed me in my prettiest ruffled apron. It did not take very long to become acquainted with the children. They all knew Clarence and seemed much interested in his little sister.

There was one very pretty little girl, just my age, that I loved from the beginning. She smiled and asked if I would like to sit with her. Her name was Leonora. This was the beginning of a beautiful friendship which lasted until her death some 45 years later. My daughter, Sue's mother, is named for her.

The teacher was a middle aged man. His hair was turning gray. His name was "Mr. Campbell". The children called him "Teacher". He had no bell to ring, and when the time came to start school he would go out in the yard and wave a book and call, "Books! Books!"

All the children my age had been in school the year

before and were more advanced than I. They were ready for the "Second Reader", and they could write words and figures on the blackboard. Mr. Campbell put me in the "First Reader" class. When he gave me a piece of chalk and sent me to the blackboard to write "C-A-T, R-A-N, D-O-G .. THE CAT CAN RUN," he found that I was left-handed. He immediately tied up my left hand in his clean handkerchief and required me to write with my right hand. The result was comical. A snicker ran around the room and I was about to cry. Mr. Campbell took a ruler from his desk, and said:

"The first one who laughs at this little girl will get his knuckles cracked!", and so I gradually learned to use my right hand.

Friday afternoons were given over to a program of recitations. Each child was required to speak a piece. To me, this was the best day of the week. Sometimes visitors were present. As the months went by I learned "Sheridan's Ride", "Barbara Fritchie", and many other standard poems.

All the children took their dinners to school. When the weather was pleasant they ate out under the trees.

The winter following was very severe, the mercury below zero much of the time. The snow lay on the ground in drifts. Father came home only on Saturday nights. There was much coasting and jingling of sleigh bells. Clarence made a bob-sled and took me to school as I could not walk through the deep snow.

Father had a black, fur-lined overcoat that had become too shabby to wear. He was a very large man and there was a great deal of material in the coat. Mamma cut it up and made a coat for Margaret and one for me, turning it with the fur side out. Aunt Lucy made each of us a crocheted hood of scarlet wool, and we had knitted red mittens and wool stockings, so we were all set for the winter.

Clarence set me on the sled one morning as an icy wind was blowing. He had on ear muffs and a wide knitted

scarf wrapped around his head. He ran all the way to school. When he reached the door and turned to carry me in, the sled was empty. Far down the road he saw a red and black speck in a big snowdrift.

In a very few minutes he was lifting me out and we were soon back in the warm school house. Mr. Campbell and the children were watching from the window and all wanted to do something to help. I was nearly frozen. Mr. Campbell got a pan of snow, and one of the big girls removed my shoes and stockings, and they took turns rubbing my feet and hands with snow. Clarence sat and held me in his arms until I cried myself to sleep. Then they placed his overcoat on the bench before the fire and I slept there until the noon recess. There were not many children present and there was very little noise. When I awoke I was the heroine of the day, and was the recipient of oranges, pie and cake from different lunch boxes. Of course after this I was kept home from school until the weather moderated.

Mamma had decided to have my hair cut!

She really could not give me so much time and attention. My hair was long, and fine and it tangled easily. I cried every morning when she combed out the snarls to curl it with a brush around her finger before I went to school. She was going to raise a lot of chickens and the hens were ready to set. So one Saturday morning we went in the buggy up near Shiloh "where a lady lived who cut her husband's hair."

"Yes, indeed! I can cut your little girl's hair," she said; "My man ain't never seen no barber since we was married, an' I don't aim fer my boys to never see one. That'll be 25 cents an' it's worth it!"

Mamma gave her the money. She was beginning to wish we had stayed at home. She stayed in the "settin'" room while the lady took me into the kitchen. Mamma did not want to see the "execution".

In a few minutes the lady called:

"There! now, you can come on in, Mis' Thomas, I think I done a mighty fine job of it!"

Mamma stood in the door and stared at me in horror.

The lady had shingled my hair close to my head - and I was a sight! Mamma did not say anything. She picked up the long curls and wrapped them tenderly in her handkerchief. I had not seen a looking glass so was unconscious of the catastrophe. We bade the lady barber "Good-bye" and went home. Mamma did not say a word all the way.

Evaline looked at me in mild surprise, and said:

"Pap always says 'Purty is as Purty does'! - but I wouldn't a cut her hair! I ain't purty an' I know it!"

Clarence did not laugh at me. He gave me a pair of pigeons. It was nearly time for Father to come home. He walked out from town when the weather was nice, and I always ran to meet him when he appeared at the bend in the road.

But today Mamma said:

"Stella, will you go upstairs a few minutes and not let father see you until I have told him about your hair?"

This was disappointing. He never failed to bring me something, and I wanted to tell him about the beautiful pigeons Clarence had given to me. But I disappeared up the stairs as father walked in the yard. Mamma did not tell him about my hair. She didn't know how.

I waited about three minutes and then, very timidly, I peeped in at the door and pleaded: "May I come in now, Mamma?"

"Of course you may come in," said Father, then turning abruptly, he saw my shorn head. He looked at Mamma:

"Oh, Ida, how could you do it? I would give one hundred dollars to have those curls back on this child's head."

It was the first time he had ever spoken to her with displeasure. Her lips trembled and her eyes filled with tears. Then he smiled and gathered us both in his long arms, and said:

"Never mind. She is our sweet little girl--curls or

no curls, and they will grow out again soon, and I'll bet ten dollars they will be prettier than they were before."

I arrived late to school Monday morning.

The children were all in their seats, Mr. Campbell busy at his desk. When I removed my bonnet, there was a shout of laughter all around the room. Mr. Campbell looked up. He seemed startled but he reached for his ruler, and said:

"The next one who laughs at this little girl will get his knuckles cracked!"

GEORGIANA

School closed the first of May.

That was a very busy, interesting spring. There were baby ducks and baby guineas, three hundred little chickens, and the cow had a baby calf. A man came out from St. Louis and gave Clarence 25 dollars for ten pairs of pigeons. He brought us a new dog. We named him Rover. Father said perhaps he would not "rove" so much with that name. Clarence made a little wagon and dog harness for me. I gathered apples and cucumbers, tomatoes and onions, and had a fine time with Rover pulling the wagon with fruit and vegetables to the kitchen door.

One day in June, Father suddenly became ill at the drug store. Uncle Jim came out for Mamma. They thought it best for Father to stay at Uncle Jim's to be near the doctor, and they hoped he would be well in a few days. But the weeks passed and he did not improve. Mamma stayed in town with him, coming home only for a few hours once or twice a week.

It was an anxious summer. Aunt Lucy and the children did not come out, and I was not allowed to go to town. Clarence and the hired man, and Evaline, were obliged to look after everything. I was a very lonesome little girl. I did so want to see Father.

Mamma came out one morning with Uncle John. She could stay only an hour. Father was no better. He required someone with him every minute, day and night. She asked Evaline to prepare a basket of fresh fruit and eggs, while she went for a jar of sweet cream which was hanging in the well. Just then a lady drove into the yard. She was an old friend that Mamma had not seen for years.

She had with her a sixteen year old girl--her daughter, Georgiana. And she had come to ask if she might leave Georgiana with us until she could make some other arrangements. The girl had had a bitter quarrel with her stepfather.

Mamma hurriedly explained about father's illness, and the necessity of returning to him immediately, but she added:

"Yes, leave her here for awhile. She can look after Stella and assist Evaline with the chickens."

So Georgiana was with us for nearly two years.

She was a very pretty girl, with red cheeks and black eyes and curly black hair. And she could play the organ! There were two song books in a drawer of the instrument; "Gospel Hymns" and one containing all the old-fashioned songs and those that were popular during the Civil War. Georgiana had a sweet voice and we liked to hear her sing and play. She was very good-natured and she encouraged me to sing with her, so gradually I learned the different songs.

And Georgiana was a heart-breaker. Clarence's friends found frequent excuses to drop in during the day, and they returned in the evening. Older young men came too and Georgiana was in love three times before the year was up.

SORROW

Clarence and I returned to school in September with heavy hearts. Father was no better. The doctors said

there was no hope that we could have him with us through the winter. Mamma was worn out and sad. We had seen so little of her all summer. I had not seen Father since he had taken ill in June. Clarence had gone to see him frequently, but they thought best for me to remember him as he was in health.

On the 9th of October, 1886, he passed away after four months of intense suffering. Dear Father! He did not live to see his dreams come true--the result of his labors with the extensive orchards. And our poor, dear Mamma! She must lose her beloved husband in less than four years after their marriage.

Father was known and loved by everyone in Belleville, and his funeral was attended by hundreds of its citizens.

When the casket was lowered into the open grave--Lawrence, Margaret, Little John and Garland, and I--each stepped forward and dropped a white rose--a token of our love.

Dear Father! When I stand beside your grave, fifty years later, I see again a little broken-hearted girl--dropping a white rose on the casket of the only father she had ever known!

A JOURNEY TO AUNT ELONA'S

Spring again 1887. Clarence and I were out of school. We had lived through a sad and desolate winter. Mamma taught Georgiana to sew. Georgiana cheered us with her music, and her romances kept Evaline in continued suspense.

"Can't never tell which 'feller' will turn up next!" she remarked as she solemnly scratched her back.

Mamma, grief-stricken and discouraged, depended more and more on Clarence. He was a man now, though only 17, and he gradually took over much of the responsibility of the farm. He broke Tam-o-shanter to the harness and

saddle, and the beautiful highbred colt danced and pranced like a frisky kitten.

The fruit trees would not bear for another year. The orchards were beautiful. Aunt Lucy and the children came out occasionally after school closed. She had been to St. Louis and brought Margaret and me each a dark blue straw "bonnet". The brim was shirred with blue satin and trimmed with tiny pink rosebuds. Wide ribbons of blue satin tied under the chin.

My hair had grown so it looked presentable with a ribbon band around my head. Mamma had made an outfit of new clothes for me during the winter. Her stitches were so tiny, and all the seams finished so neatly, Evaline declared I could wear my clothes "wrong side out and nobody'd know the difference."

It was necessary for Mamma to go again to Patoka to attend to some business connected with the Mound Farm. Clarence would drive Tam-o-shanter hitched to our light buggy.

The distance was sixty miles. Today we can easily drive in an automobile from St. Louis to Patoka in two hours. In 1887 it was an eventful journey of two long days. Mamma had a friend living in Germantown which was just half way to Patoka. We would travel that far the first day and remain over night. So plans were made to make the trip in July.

Our hired man had married. He and his wife were to take charge of everything. Evaline went home for a good rest, and Georgiana went to visit an aunt "up in the prairie". She became engaged to her handsome young cousin before the summer was over.

Mamma had prepared a lunch basket, and Clarence placed a box in the buggy containing several pairs of prize pigeons which he was taking to the Patoka cousins. Our valises were packed, and we started at four o'clock in the morning.

Whenever we came to a shady spot we stopped so Tam-o-shanter could take a short rest. He was only a colt

and he did not miss a thing along the road but side-stepped at every stump and telephone pole. At noon we stopped for an hour where a stream of clear water crossed the road in the woods. Clarence unhitched the horse and gave him some oats from a small box in the buggy. When we were all refreshed we continued our journey.

It was dusk when we reached Germantown. We were expected and a lovely supper was waiting. Fried chicken and custard pie! Our host was Dr. Heely. Both he and his wife were related to us by marriage. He was the only physician in the town and he also had the only drug store. There were six children, the eldest a boy, Oliver, just Clarence's age, and I was delighted to find a little girl named "Susie" who was nine years old. We received a very cordial welcome and remained over one day. Clarence left a pair of pigeons for Oliver. We left very early the second morning for Patoka. Mrs. Heely had prepared a delicious lunch for us, and again we picnicked at noon beside the road.

When we came to the big bridge crossing the Okaw River at Carlyle, Tam-o-shanter became frightened at the shadow of the tall iron beams. He kicked up his heels and bolted. We expected every minute that the buggy would be turned over and smashed. My pretty blue straw bonnet had become untied and it blow off into a field. One of the pigeons got away, and still the colt galloped wildly on. We were a mile from the bridge before Clarence had him under control. We could not take the time to go back, so I never saw my bonnet again.

We reached Patoka before dark, and we spent the night and the next day at Aunt Nellie's where Mamma and I had been to dinner four years before. The children here were all much older than I and there was nothing to interest a little girl like me.

But the second day we went out into the country to Aunt Elona's, who lived two and a half miles from the Mound Farm. How can I describe this undreamed of place of enchantment? This wonderful home where I was to come

again and again for many, many happy visits throughout the years? Aunt Elona had only recently moved here and the pretty gabled house, in the midst of a forest of fine old trees had just been completed. There was still a large sand pile that the workmen had left, an ideal place to play!

"Uncle Charley" (Bonnell) was a tall, jolly kindly man, and there was Aunt Elona's sister--Aunt Ruth--all the children called her "Auntie".

(These were all new relations to me.)

But the joy of it all was, there was a whole house full of little cousins for me to play with. I had never had the companionship of other children, and was delirious with happiness when there was opportunity for play.

There were three of Aunt Elona's children: Lee, Grace and Floy...and there were two sisters, Maud and Bertha who were Uncle Jasper's daughters. Their mother had died and they were reared to womanhood in Aunt Elona's home. There was a big swing and a hammock, and little lambs and little turkeys, and we frolicked from morning 'till night.

They did not take me to the Mound Farm on this trip. Aunt Prudy and Uncle Harve and the baby had moved to California. We stayed a week. Then, Mamma having finished her business we returned home the way we had gone without going to Vandalia. We stopped overnight again at German-town with the Heely's, and arrived home safe after a two week's absence.

I have had many wonderful trips through the passing years, including a tour of Europe, but none have been more thrilling than that first journey to Aunt Elona's.

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS

Up to my ninth year we had not celebrated Christmas as was the universal custom. This was the anniversary of Sister May's death, and last year father had left us only

two months before the joyous season.

Christmas, to me, meant a special dinner of roast goose and mince pie, a bag of oranges, raisins and candy, and a pair of new gloves, shoes, or other article of clothing. Mamma read to us the story of the birth of Jesus from the New Testament--then became absorbed in her own sad memories. We had never had a Christmas tree and I had never seen Santa Claus. Of course I had read many beautiful Christmas stories in the St. Nicholas Magazine and was fascinated with the pictures, but it was explained to me from the beginning that Santa Claus was a myth--like a fairy. (This is another instance of the loneliness of my childhood.)

But this year--1887--Aunt Lucy invited me to spend the Christmas season, the whole week, with them in town. Besides her three children, there were Uncle Jim's two little boys, and with me there would be, as Aunt Lucy said, "just a good half dozen".

Such preparations for the visit! I must have a new dress and a new nightgown. And all my pretty aprons must be starched and ironed. I was obliged to memorize two lengthy Christmas poems for the children: "Annie and Willie's Prayer" for Margaret, and "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" for the boys.

On my return home I gave such a glowing account of my holiday, Mamma wrote it down and I gave it for a recitation the next Friday afternoon at school:

CHRISTMAS

by

Ida A. Thomas

Christmas! Sweet mysterious word! 1888 years since the first Christmas day. How good and loving it was in the blessed Savior to come to this world as a little child, and how kind and wise it was of the Wise Men of the East who brought gifts of gold to this lowly little King.

Had it not been for this wise, kind thought and act, it might be that Christmas Day would not have been set so holy apart for the rejoicing of little children, causing their hearts to rejoice more and more as they grow older and more fully understand what Christmas has really done for them. And we, as little children should be very grateful to our dear friends for all the pleasures we enjoy.

And so it was that I had a happy Christmas of which I am about to tell you. In the first place, I went to a Sunday School entertainment--there was singing, music and recitations, which interested me very much. There were a little boy and girl who sang the sweetest I ever heard. The little girl sang such a pretty little song to the merry chimes of unseen bells, and the chorus was this:

"Oh list to the chimes of the Christmas bells
Merrily Merrily Oh;
Santa is on the way, they tell
Merrily, Merrily Oh."

Then she sang another, and the chorus was this:

"Somebody is coming, and who shall it be?
Somebody is coming, but wait 'till you see."

Suddenly we heard a loud ringing of sleigh bells, then the stamping of feet as if someone was stamping and shaking off the snow before entering...AND SOMEBODY DID COME..

And whom do you think it was?

Why, it was SANTA CLAUS, with his great red coat and long white beard. (Santa Claus was "Uncle John" but we did not know it). How did we know it was he? Because we did--if for no other reason by his jovial countenance and the merry twinkle of his eye. You would have known him too, had you seen the great baskets he bore on either shoulder and the great big bag on his back, all overflowing with good things as his heart was with kindness.

t, After the salutations he put down his load and was
so greeted by a beautiful little girl with long yellow curls.
ag (This little girl was Zoe Harrison, now Mrs. Kent Koerner.)
er He then busied himself presenting to each and every child
le a paper bag filled with nuts, candies and oranges, receiv-
ing their thanks most graciously.

m- The entertainment was now over and all were happy
that so many hearts were made glad.

h Now I will tell you what kind of a time I had--just
a the merriest, maddest, gayest gladest time I ever had or
nd want to have. And that was passed between two homes of
a families having little children, two in one, and three in
the other. The homes of both were open to us.

Had you seen our pranks, frolics and tricks
You would have thought us a jovial six!

The day and the time and the hour were ours, and
didn't we take advantage of it, and didn't we have just
the jolliest kind of a racket, and oh, but didn't things
get scattered?

We played upstairs, and downstairs, and in my la-
dies' chamber. We played all kinds of games, we played
all kinds of plays, and had all kinds of playthings. I
will tell you about the things I liked best:

A drum, and a doll, and story about a cat,
And the fun and the frolic and the glee,
And last, but not least, the Christmas Tree.

I, like so many do, received just the very things I
wanted most: a scrap and story book and an autograph al-
bum. I thought much of my presents but more of those that
gave them. Oh, yes, and a stocking filled with knick-
knacks. You could see the raisins, grapes, nuts and can-
dies as plain as if there had been no stocking there.
From its looks I would have thought it a fairy stocking
for it looked as if it might have been woven on the web

of their gossamer loom. From its size I would have been certain it was Santa's very own. But from its light and airy appearance it could not have been his. For Santa's stockings must be very very warm, or else he'd freeze his toes going out into the cold and snow--as he does, you know.

Whose stocking that really was I suppose I shall never know, but then, I should be satisfied, for I got all that was in it from the very top to the toe.

Now I've told you all about it, in hopes that you, in part, will share its pleasures over again with me!

LAKE CHRISTINE

Belleville had no water supply. Up to this time the citizens had depended upon their individual wells and cisterns. But the town was growing and there was urgent need of a large reservoir for water storage. A company was formed and they began searching for a suitable location for an artificial lake.

At the back of our farm was a steep hill leading down to a deep ravine in the woods. This ravine was fed by several springs. The Water Company finally decided this was their ideal location.

The work of grading started in the fall of 1887. The only entrance was through our place, and a road was cut along the edge of the farm from the toll road, up and down the hills, back to the ravine.

Teams and shovels were going in and out all day long, and it was very fascinating to watch the progress of the grading. Aunt Lucy came out with the children and she would take us all down to see the horses and the shovels dumping the dirt. Sometimes one of the good natured drivers would put Lawrence on a horse for a few minutes, and in his importance he called:

"Don't ever forget I'm one of the men who started this water-works!"

When completed, which was not for another year, the lake was nearly a mile long and 200 feet wide. It lay in four graceful curves, lined on one side by a forest of old trees.

In later years many happy days were spent here. It was private property, not open to the public. I entertained my friends, boating in the summer--skating in the winter--on "beautiful Lake Christine".

VALENTINE TO LAKE CHRISTINE
(Written during High School Days)

Oh, could I but find words to express
Thy charms for me as I gaze upon thy loveliness
And what my heart doth feel,
I would my sweetest joys reveal;
I would tell of childhood's sweetest dream
And of my love for thee
My beautiful Lake Christine.

I would tell of thy green banks in springtime
Of thy waving water's whispering rhyme;
Of the flowers that around thee bloom
Of thy balmy breath and its sweet perfume,
Of the windswept clouds, and sky that is seen
In thy clear depths,
My beautiful Lake Christine.

I would tell of thy playful finny tribe
That beneath thy waters glide,
That to my outstretched hand come so near
Then dart away as if in play and not from fear;
I would tell of thy bright water's gleam
And what I owe to thee
My beautiful Lake Christine.

And of the happy hours of a summer's day
 As I watch thy dancing waters play,
 As idly and dreamily I float
 In my tiny boat,
 Sweet to me as a summer dream
 On thee to row
 My beautiful Lake Christine.

When autumn turns the forest to purple, brown and
 gold,
 Then all thy splendors doth unfold;
 Like a glittering gem, thy emerald hills between,
 Then all thy regal beauty may be seen.
 Let poets sing of the Alpine pearls and Loch Katrine
 But give to me my own,
 My beautiful Lake Christine.

And when the year grows old,
 And the wind blows shrill and cold,
 And the birds all have flown
 And we hear the winter king's moan,
 Then thou covereth thy bosom with an icy sheen;
 Oh, then what joy thou holdeth for me
 My beautiful Lake Christine.

(Estelle Messenger)

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CLARENCE

May again ... 1888.

Clarence was now six foot tall, a fine looking young man, blue eyes and waving brown hair. He was always of a quiet disposition, gentle and affectionate, and we depended upon him for everything. He was the head of the family.

During the past year he had still been a member of Mr. Campbell's "advanced class", but now he decided that school for him was over. He had a talent for mathematics and was very handy with all sorts of tools. When an opening in the Harrison Mills in Belleville was offered him, he decided to take a year's training.

Clarence reported at the mill the first day of May. He rode Tam-o-shanter each day to his work. At the end of the first week he complained of a severe headache. The impure air, the noise and confusion in the mill made him very nervous. All his life he had breathed the pure air of the open country.

One day in the second week he came home early in the afternoon and went to bed with a hard chill. A high fever developed in the night, and delirium followed in a few days. The attack came on so suddenly we could not realize that he was hopelessly ill. The doctor pronounced it "Typhoid", and although everything possible was done for him, God called our darling Clarence home on the 20th of May.

We were all stunned by the sudden blow. Mamma was almost insane in her grief. Uncle Jim and Cousin Dan came immediately, so kind and sympathetic, and made the arrangements for the funeral. (Poor, dear Cousin Dan--only two months before, his three year old twins, Clyde and Cecil, had died on the same day with diphtheria.)

Relatives and neighbors and friends came to Clarence's funeral. Many I did not know. The house was full to overflowing. Mr. Belcher came all the way from the Mound Farm. Mamma seemed dazed and entirely oblivious of my

presence as I sat quietly beside her. Two strange men, driving a horse from the livery stable in Belleville, came in just before the service was to begin. They were Dr. Heely and his son Oliver from Germantown where we had visited the summer before. Mamma was so touched with the sympathy and thoughtfulness of these kind friends, she broke into a torrent of tears, and sobbed brokenly:

"Oh, I can't bear it! I can't bear it! He was my last child, and now I'm all alone! Why does God punish me like this?"

Dr. Heely took both her hands in his, and said very gently:

"We read about Clarence last night in the St. Louis paper and we took the early train to Belleville this morning. We realize what this loss will mean to you, and we want to take you and Stella home with us tonight. Please come and let us do what we can to comfort you."

And so it was, we returned home after the funeral. Mamma packed some clothes into a valise and asked Cousin Dan to get someone to look after things, and we took the late evening train to Germantown, arriving there about midnight.

GERMANTOWN

We stayed two months. Mamma was ill in bed the first two weeks and the Heelys were very kind. My acquaintance with the children was soon renewed and we played from morning until night. Had it not been that there was so much to amuse and interest me in these new surroundings, I would have had more time and given more thought to Mamma's outburst:

"He was my last child and now I am all alone!"

Germantown derived its name from the fact that all the 500 population were Germans. Dr. Heely's was the only American family in town, as well as the only Protestant family.

There was only a Catholic church and a Catholic school where English was not taught. Everybody wore wooden shoes and I was so delighted when Dr. Heely bought a pair for me.

The houses were built with the front step on the sidewalk and a flower garden in the rear. The sidewalks were uneven planks. The streets were country lanes. Cows grazed along the sides and occasionally one rested contentedly in the very center of the street.

As the weeks passed and the time was drawing near for our departure, Mrs. Heely decided she and Oliver would drive us home with their horse and buggy. She wished to investigate the Belleville schools. So we started one day of the last week in July.

The weather was very warm and the horse was not so young. When we were about ten miles from our home, he slowly sank to the ground and died between the shafts. Mrs. Heely prevailed upon a farmer, for the consideration of ten dollars, to hitch her buggy behind his big farm wagon and convey us the balance of our journey.

AFTER TEN YEARS

And so my first ten years passed, with their pleasures and heartaches, but there was always an atmosphere of security and love. What had the following ten years in store for me? What revelations were to be unfolded?

It was difficult to take up our regular routine of life again. That heart-breaking vacancy! We seemed always to be listening for Clarence's footstep. For his whistle to Tam-o-shanter.

Evaline came home to us immediately. She was very solemn and had little to say. She removed her bonnet and two extra dresses and went to work without a word of instruction. She gathered vegetables from the garden, killed and fried a chicken, and baked two pies without comment. She was a great comfort. This was her way of expressing her sympathy.

The orchards were laden with fruit. There were grapes and melons and tomatoes--all that father and Clarence had planned with so much enthusiasm--and now, neither of them here to see the results of their labors.

Mamma was not a business woman. She was too generous. She arranged with a neighbor to gather and sell the fruit on the shares. Friends and neighbors came with their baskets and helped themselves to all they wanted with never a thought of pay. Mamma, very probably, would not have taken any pay had it been offered. Each spring it was her custom to order a barrel of sugar, and during the long summer she would spend hours and hours over the hot stove making all sorts of jelly and preserves, pickles and catsup, filling glass jars and bottles by the dozen.

She would take Evaline and go "blackberrying" over at the other farm, and they would can and preserve gallons and gallons of berries. Every year they canned one hundred quarts of tomatoes in tin cans decorated with sealing wax.

Any and every guest departed with a generous sample taken from the supply on the cellar shelves.

Our neighbors were mostly German. But I have not mentioned "Cousin Ollie" who lived only a quarter of a mile from us. She was a sister of "Cousin Sue" Wershing who appeared earlier in my story. Cousin Ollie had a large family of girls and boys. "Daisy" being near my age was one of my especial companions at school.

Although it was a longer walk, I sometimes stopped by for Daisy in the morning on my way to school and her mother usually slipped a golden brown biscuit with honey into my lunch basket.

We had one upstairs room that was not plastered and which we used for a store room. One of the tall, walnut cupboards--made by Grandfather Messenger--was here, also one of the bedsteads he had made. This was piled high with the extra feather mattresses and pillows. There were trunks, and boxes and tables, and several heavy chairs were hanging high on pegs that were screwed into the stud-

ling. This was a lovely place to be when it stormed. I loved to snuggle in the high bed among the pillows and read Louisa Alcott's books as the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled, and listen to the patter of the rain on the roof and the tree branches blowing against the windows.

Mamma was putting this store room in order one Saturday morning, as I stood before a window looking at some old magazines she had sorted to give away. The headboard of a disconnected bedstead leaned against a wall. It had rollers on it and, as Mamma moved a trunk the headboard started rolling. It crashed against a heavy chair that was hanging on a peg above me. As the chair fell to the floor it struck me on the head. The injury did not seem so very serious and was soon forgotten.

But the next day (Sunday) we had gone to Cousin Ollie's to dinner, and in the afternoon I suddenly fainted while playing in the yard with the children. Mamma was much upset. She thought immediately of the blow I had received on the head the day before. There was no telephone and none of the men were at home to go for a doctor. She prevailed upon one of the neighbors to hitch his horse and take us to town to Aunt Lucy's.

There was nobody at home. The family had gone for Sunday night tea at Uncle Harry's father's home. Mamma asked the family next door if she might bring me in there and send for a doctor.

This was a German family who could scarcely speak English, but they were very hospitable and seemed genuinely pleased to be of assistance. I was placed on a couch in their sitting room and Dr. Perryman came. He left some medicine and said he would see us the next morning at Aunt Lucy's. They returned home about nine o'clock and I was carried over and put to bed.

Margaret and Lawrence were not allowed to see me the next morning before they went to school. The doctor came just before noon, and he put leeches on my head--four on each temple. They were real small and I could not see them. They pricked like a needle.

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All the family were downstairs eating lunch when Margaret slipped into my room. She looked at me and gave a little scream. The leeches were gradually growing to the size of my little finger. Margaret ran to the dresser and snatched a handglass which she handed to me. Just then one of the leeches dropped down my neck inside my nightgown, then another dropped, then another. They were all over the pillow, the squirming ugly things, and Margaret and I both screamed so loud the whole family came bounding up the stairs to learn the cause of such an uproar.

The leeches were speedily disposed of. Whether they were responsible for my early recovery I do not know, but Mamma took me home at the end of the week and I was soon back at the Whiteside School struggling with the Multiplication Table and learning new poems for the Friday afternoon programs.

* * * * *

And now Uncle Jim and Aunt Lucy, and their families, were planning to move away from Belleville.

We would indeed be more lonely than ever.

Uncle Jim had sold the "Advocate" and was going to live in Denver, Colorado. Aunt Lucy's family was going to buy a ranch in California. Uncle John was going with them. They all departed in the spring of 1889, and I was a very, very forlorn little girl

(Thirty-five years later Margaret as Mrs. Lyman Stookey was California State Regent, then Vice President General of the Daughters of the American Revolution.)

We are still friends.

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THE "MAY QUEEN" AND THE "UNITY PICNIC"

It was the spring of 1890.

The past year had been uneventful. We had gradually become resigned to the thought of Father and Clarence in heaven. We were all very sad the day a stranger came and gave Mamma two hundred dollars for Tam-o-shanter. The beautiful prize pigeons were also sold--the last connecting links with our beloved Clarence.

The farm was rented to a neighbor, all but the house and garden and whatever fruit we needed for our own use. Lake Christine had been completed for some time. The entrance to the beautiful drive through our place was at one corner of our front yard where the giant elm spread its long branches above the two roadways. The drive wound through the orchards and down over the dam to the woods beyond.

Faithful Evaline stayed with us and Georgiana had been with us the past winter. She had been visiting several months with relatives at Eureka Springs, and had been engaged twice since we had seen her, but now she was again fancy free.

It was the annual custom to hold a picnic when the Whiteside School closed on the first of May, and a queen was chosen by vote of the children. The queen wore a white dress and a crown of gilt paper. She walked under a square canope that was covered with gayly colored tissue paper and carried by four maids of honor.

I was the favored one chosen this spring, May 1890, and as I look back at the little queen, with her four maids, walking a mile to the picnic grounds--all the children following two by two--Mr. Campbell bustling along, first on one side then on the other to keep them in step, and all the mothers following in buggies with the dinner baskets--I know that this was one of the supreme moments of my childhood.

The following year was my last at the Whiteside School. The winter passed pleasantly and quickly enough.

My friend Leonora and I exchanged occasional overnight visits which were ever a delight to me. She had three grown sisters and four big brothers, and one brother Richard--younger than herself. They had a beautiful home two miles beyond the school. Leonora's mother was an invalid, and they took me upstairs to "speak a piece" for her.

I went occasionally with Georgiana to neighborhood parties and to evening spelling bees at the school house. One night she had gone without me and I went to bed early. About nine o'clock someone knocked on the door. Mamma opened it and a young man for whom the party was being given, said: "Please, we want Stella, she should come over and speak her piece about 'How Socker Set a Hen,' also about 'Bismarck'." So I was allowed to get dressed and go back with him to the party. (He was a young German, named Frank Shoemacher.)

Here I made some new friends--Josie Warmuth and her two grown brothers, Frank and Max. They went everywhere together and seemed to take a fancy to me. One evening they stopped at our house and persuaded Mamma to allow me to go with them to a country dance. Georgiana had gone off visiting again. I went with Josie and her brothers to frequent dances during the next three years and always had a wonderful time. They finally married and I lost track of them, but always remembered with appreciation their many kindnesses to me.

The Heely family had moved from Germantown to Belleville and we exchanged frequent visits with them. And now it was the first of May again and time for our school picnic. Mr. Campbell brought his wife and little daughter, Josie (aged about seven) to the picnic and we became good friends. Josie went to dancing school and her mother persuaded Mamma to send me. I was now thirteen years old.

We had exchanged the parlor organ for a square piano and I was taking music lessons on Saturday morning from Professor Feigenbutz. He lived in the historic house that had been the home of Governor Reynolds in 1860-5.

Professor Paro was our dancing teacher. His classes were held Saturday afternoon. Here I made new friends that were to endure throughout my life. Mrs. Paro was always present--a dear, motherly soul, and their jolly, grown son "Hamilton" played the piano during the lessons.

On the first day of August 1891 (Saturday) there was an all day basket picnic in the grove adjoining the Unity Church in Ridge Prairie. I went with Cousin Dan's daughters, Lulu and Bessie.

Cousin Hannah Glenn, who was Cousin Dan's sister, was there with her family. And they brought with them another cousin of whom I had often heard but never met. Anne Hoffmann a beautiful girl one year older than I. She lived in O'Fallon. We were destined to be congenial friends through the coming years.

I give here the program of the day, given me by Cousin Amanda Glenn nearly fifty years later. I am sure we could not get any audience to sit through such an endurance test today.

UNITY SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC PROGRAMME

Saturday, August 1, 1891

Song No. 151

Invocation

Song No. 167

Welcome Address

Song No. 208

He Abideth Faithful Walter Rutherford

Only Five Minutes Bessie Phillips

Ecclesiastical Amusements Etta Glenn

Song No. 193

A Voice From the Poorhouse Jane Phillips

Death of the Beautiful Nora Rutherford

Little Phil Estelle Messenger

Song..... No. 159

The Prisoner..... Ollie Phillips

Total Abstinence..... Hattie Phillips

Temperance Song

Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight..... Estelle Messenger

Song..... No. 93

Address..... John McCann

Elder Lamb's Donation..... Lulu Phillips

My Mother..... Nora Rutherford

The New Church Organ..... Estelle Messenger

Song..... No. 75

We Must Think..... W. T. Glenn

Address..... Henry McCann

Song..... No. 213

Song..... No. 146

Address..... Mr. Elliott

Song..... No. 207

Address..... Rev. Fuller

Song..... No. 98

Address..... Brother McCann

Song..... No. 30

Benediction

(Copied from the "Belleville New Democrat"
June 3, 1892)

PARO'S PARTY AND CARNIVAL

A select company of perhaps 400 persons, ladies, gentlemen and young people from all portions of the city, together with parents and special friends of Professor Paro's pupils, were gathered at the City Park Hall last night to witness and enjoy the delightful dancing, excellent music and enchanting program prepared for their entertainment by Mr. Paro, with a great deal of painstaking care and drill on the part of the pupils. The program so pleasingly presented is as given:

Part I

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| Opening Overture - National Airs | Orchestra |
| 1. Solo - "Polish Dance" | Miss Josie Campbell |
| 2. "Skirt Dance" | Miss Martie Needles |
| 3. "Highland Fling" | Miss Blanche Lett |
| 4. "Normandie Peasant Dance" | Miss Estelle Messenger |
| 5. "Sicilian Dance" | Miss Josie Campbell |
| 6. "Bow and Arrow Dance" | Miss Martie Needles |
| 7. "Spanish Dance" (El Zarongo) | Miss Edna Schaefer |

Part II

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| Overture - "Erminie" | Orchestra |
| 8. Duet "Sailor's Dance" | Miss Josie Campbell |
| | Miss Blanche Lett |
| 9. "America's Own"... with flags - English, German
Irish and American | Miss Martie Needles |
| 10. Recitation | Miss Estelle Messenger |
| 11. Pause | |
| 12. Tambourine Drill | |
| Misses Josie Campbell - Blanche Lett | |
| Martie Needles - Estelle Messenger | |
| Ora Dougherty - Edna Schaefer | |
| Gertrude and Lulu Sikkema | |

CHARLEY

Mamma received a letter from Patoka one day in August, 1891. It seemed to upset her, but she said nothing and we did not think anything about it when she wrote a reply.

She and Georgiana had gone to town a few days later, and Evaline and I were at home alone. Late in the afternoon our dog began barking furiously, and Evaline casually remarked:

"Strange youngun' comin' down the road, reckon he got lost!"

I called to the excited dog, and was dumbfounded when a very odd-looking boy turned into the yard and knocked at the open door. He was about fourteen, small for his age, and wore a home-made suit that had been "cut down". He wore a little round straw hat and new shoes with "copper" toes. He carried a small, canvas "telescope" which he placed in the doorway as he spoke:

"This is where Mis' Thomas lives, ain't it? And I guess you're Stella, ain't you?"

"Why, yes," I answered, "but Mamma is not at home. She had gone to town, What did you want?"

He took Mamma's letter out of his pocket.

"She wrote here for me to come down here to live," he said, "I'm your brother Charley! Mis' Thomas ain't your real mother, you know!"

My whole world toppled over.

I did not believe him. I was frightened. Then I had a faint remembrance of Mamma sobbing when Clarence left us:

"He was my last child and now I am all alone!"

I ran to Evaline and hid my face in her skirts and cried my heart out. She did not say a word but sat and stroked my hair. (Dear Evaline. Sometimes she was not so foolish. "and Stella was her favor-ite.")

Mamma was very much distressed when she returned home and found me broken-hearted over the shock of Charley's sudden arrival and his blunt information.

She had intended to tell me all the long, sad story before he came, but put it off from day to day as we are all so inclined to do with a disagreeable task. She supposed the folks would write when we were to expect him but instead, on receipt of her letter, they immediately put him on the train for Belleville.

Now, he was out somewhere walking around in the orchard. No doubt he was disgusted with his reception. Mamma sent Georgiana out to look for him.

"Keep him out until supper time," instructed Mamma, "I want to have a little talk with Stella."

She took me by the hand and we went into the front room. She sat down in a rocking chair and took me on her lap. She looked so sad and unhappy I could not bear to think she was not my mother.

"Stella, my dear," she began, "I know I should have told you long ago, but I love you so much. And after May died you seemed to fit right in her place in my heart and I could not bring myself to tell you. It is a long story and tomorrow I will tell you all about it, but now it is nearly supper time and Evaline will soon be calling us. But my dear, will you try to be kind to Charley? He is your brother and that is the only reason I wrote them they might send him to us. He has not had so happy a home as you have had, and now his Aunt Anna is dead and Uncle George must break up his home and take his five children to Aunt Elona's.

"If Clarence had lived, we would have had Charley here before this for Clarence wanted him. He talked about it only a short time before he died. He went to see Charley the summer we drive Tam-o-shanter out to Aunt Elona's, and Clarence said when he left, Charley looked so wistful and half whispered: 'I wish I could live with my sister.'"

"But Mamma," I said, "If you are not my mother then Clarence was not my brother."

"Yes, my dear," she replied, "he was your brother and May was your sister. You all had the same father. I

will explain everything to you tomorrow. And you always have been and always will be my own darling daughter."

"Oh, but Mamma, I shall be so humiliated to meet my friends and have to explain all about Charley and that I am not really your little girl."

"My dear, they all have known your history from the beginning. They have always loved you and now they will love you all the more if you and Charley get along well together. He has not had the opportunity to go to school as you have had. So come now, let us see what we can do for him and we will all be happy together."

So I smiled at Charley across the supper table.

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IDA AMELIA TELLS HER STORY

IDA AMELIA'S STORY
(Told to Estelle Messenger)

I was born Ida Amelia Kiefhaber.

My mother was Minerva Messenger. Seventy-five years ago my grandfather, John Messenger, was a very influential man in St. Clair County. He was one of the first settlers in Illinois and a surveyor and school teacher. At one time he taught Mathematics at Rock Hill Seminary which is now Shurtliff College. His first house was two rooms, built of logs. Gradually more rooms were added and finally an upper room that was reached from the rear by a rude outside stairway. Here was his workshop where he fashioned all sorts of furniture, clocks, looms and spinning wheels.

He deeded the ground, that was a portion of his farm, for a Baptist Church and what is now the "Messenger Cemetery". The church disappeared many years ago.

There were eight children: Minerva was my mother. Amanda was Cousin Dan's mother. Pamela Anne was Cousin Gertie Lienisch's mother, and Matthew was the father of Cousin Ollie Whiteside.

Each of these four children inherited a portion of the old homestead and lived near neighbors. The four older brothers settled in Ridge Prairie, three miles away: Franklin, Charles, Elon and John.

Elon had a son named John (who was your father). Grandfather died when I was five years old and cousin John was seven. We romped together as children and, as the years passed we soberly assured our elders that some day we would be married. But they paid little attention to our vows and were inclined to smile at our mutual affection.

Uncle Elon died suddenly when John was thirteen. Uncle Elon had gone to the assistance of a neighbor whose horse was down and had become wedged in his stall. As the animal was released, it suddenly rolled over and Uncle Elon was accidentally struck on the head by the horse's hoof. He never regained consciousness. This was a great

catastrophe. He was a very important man in Ridge Prairie and had married into the prominent Piggott family of East St. Louis. He left seven children. John was the eldest son, and your aunt Elona was only three months old. She had not yet been named. So now they named her for her father--"E-lona".

After five years John had grown into a tall, handsome man with blue eyes and curly, auburn hair. He had a jolly, teasing disposition and imitated every odd character in the Prairie. He would attend camp meetings and come home and impersonate the old-fashioned fire and brimstone preachers. He was much like his mother's people, the Piggotts. Like them he was extravagant. Mother, who was very practical and serious-minded, had no patience with his nonsense--as she called it. Uncle Elon had been her favorite brother and she was very friendly with John's mother (Aunt Rebecca). Both were becoming concerned over our continued declaration that we intended to be married, and they decided to send us away to school--in opposite directions.

John was sent to McKendree College at Lebanon, and I was placed in a Convent at Corondelet (for which mother was bitterly criticized by the family). The sympathetic nuns were very kind. They encouraged me in my talent for drawing and fine needlework, and I became absorbed in the creation of the Tapestry picture you see hanging over your piano.

The summer of 1859 the whole country was wild over the political situation, the question of slavery. Everyone was discussing the Lincoln-Douglas debates. The threat of civil war hung like a black pall over the nation.

Then, in September, Aunt Rebecca was taken with a fatal illness. Mother went to her immediately. Mother was always called wherever there was sickness or death. John was grief stricken for he was very close to his mother. All the mischief was gone from his deportment. He was helpful and devoted and seemed changed suddenly to a serious-minded man.

Perhaps the two mothers came to an understanding about our romance before Aunt Rebecca passed away Sept. 29, 1859. At any rate, mother made no further objection to our marriage which took place two months later, December 4, 1859.

Two of John's older sisters were already married. His eldest sister, Ruth, now took the younger children and moved to Belleville. Jasper, who was two years younger than John, remained to assist in the management of the farm.

The Elon Messenger Place was situated at the Cross Roads and had, for years, been recognized as the best equipped farm with the most pretentious house in the prairie.

Unfortunately, John did not inherit his father's thrift and keen business judgment. He had lost his father just at the age when he most needed the wise guidance of a firm hand and kind advice of a sympathetic and understanding parent.

Mother considered us two inexperienced children, as indeed we were. I was eighteen. John was twenty. And since his parents were gone and he was her nephew, that she had nursed through the measles and all other childish ailments, it was only natural that she considered it her duty to advise him concerning all his affairs.

Mother had experienced much sorrow. Her first husband lived only three years, and there followed two bitterly disappointing marriages. She had now been a widow for many years. My sister, Annie, had married Hubert Hartmann (born in Germany) and had a large family of little children. My brother, John, had died when fifteen years old, and I was her "baby". I loved my mother devotedly.

Everything ran smoothly enough for a year. Crops were abundant, prices were high and the farm yielded a good profit. A little boy was born to us but he lived only to smile--then drift back from whence he came.

The next year Jasper answered Lincoln's call for volunteers, and joined his regiment. For war had indeed

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been declared. Another child came, and again we were left in grief and disappointment. Mother stayed with us much of the time. My health was very delicate and I was thankful for her efficient management.

John took huge loads of produce to the St. Louis market, driving a four-horse team. He started at two o'clock in the morning. Sometimes he would be absent for two days. Mother accused him of wasting his time foolishly with his "wild Piggott cousins" in East St. Louis--which he resented--and their clashes became more and more frequent.

Our little daughter was born in May, 1864, at the very crisis of the Civil War. The whole nation was in mourning. Thousands upon thousands of our soldiers had been killed in battle. Cousin Dan was in the army with your uncle Jasper. They were in the same regiment. Women were spending every spare minute knitting and sewing for the soldiers. Everyone was talking of General Grant. Sherman had just begun his march through Georgia with 60,000 men.

We named the baby "Minerva May". She was such a bright, happy, healthy child, and we were so thankful that God had permitted us to keep this beloved treasure.

When autumn came, John again made frequent trips to the St. Louis market and occasionally mother sent produce from her farm. On one particular trip they expected to realize several hundred dollars, together, on his sale. But he returned home after a two day absence with a very small sum, and he was unable to explain where the money had disappeared.

Gradually we realized that he had been drinking with strangers, and the money had been lost or loaned or stolen. He had no remembrance concerning it. Thus our troubles began and they grew more and more desperate for alas, John seemed to have inherited a fatal taste for drink, and he came home more and more frequently in an intoxicated condition.

He had the opportunity of being very successful, with the best farm in the prairie and produce selling at high

war prices, but he neglected his work and spent much of his time away from home.

When the war was over, Jasper came home. He was to be married and settle in Iowa. The Elon Messenger farm was sold and the money divided between the brothers and sisters.

We now had two little boys, Raymond and Armond. You have seen their pictures. Raymond was a beautiful child, his head a mass of golden ringlets. We were staying with mother until we could make arrangements to move to Fayette County to settle on the Mound Farm--not far from Vandalia.

Little three-year-old Raymond suddenly became alarmingly ill one day in March, 1870. His father was dispatched for a doctor, for the child had a high fever. John galloped away on his horse but the doctor did not come. Our darling Raymond died before the following morning--and John did not come until evening. His grief was inconsolable. I found myself trying to forget my own sorrow and doing my utmost to comfort him. But from that day, mother turned absolutely against him.

Perhaps, if the doctor had come, he could not have saved our darling, for Cousin Dan's baby daughter died of the same illness on the following day. The children were buried at the same hour. Then, very sorrowfully we journeyed to Vandalia and settled in our new home--the Mound Farm. May was now six years old, and Armond was a baby of two.

Our new home was on a high hill and we could see nothing but timber for miles around. Our house was new but unfinished. John worked hard from early morning until night putting in a crop and getting everything into a livable condition. I must say here that he was never known to be intoxicated again. This complete change from a prosperous farm to the wilderness, and the loss of our little boy, seemed to have given him an entirely different viewpoint of life. He was considerate and affectionate, but I was despondent and ill as the summer advanced.

Our nearest neighbor was a Mr. Cox who had come up from Tennessee and settled the year before. There were ten children in the family, and one of the sisters-- a pleasant sixteen year old girl named Martha--stayed with us and helped me with the children. Mother made us a surprise visit in September. She brought the news that sister Annie was dangerously ill and she must hurry back. But she insisted that I, too, needed especial care and she would take me and the children home with her. She advised John to "batch it for awhile and go in to Patoka every Sunday and have dinner with his sister Nellie."

It seems almost unbelievable now that we could have allowed ourselves to be so dominated. But I was ill, and we were seven miles from a doctor. Just then it seemed to me that it would be almost heaven to be back in the security of mother's comfortable home for the next few weeks. And you see I loved my mother and had always been accustomed to her arbitrary authority.

So we went home with mother. John was to come for us in six weeks. Clarence was born soon after, and he was only two days old when sister Annie died. She was Annie Hartmann's mother. Poor sister Annie!

She left a brood of little children and mother had her hands full looking after the two homes.

When John came for us I was not considered strong enough to pass a hard winter at the Mound Farm with a young baby. I was persuaded to stay with mother until spring.

To make a long story short--I did not ever go back. John hired a young couple to stay and work for him.

Mother considered our marriage a failure. She objected to our wilderness home, the children should be near a good school, and she determined it would be best for us to separate definitely. For three years there were unhappy quarrels and bitter accusations of which you are too young to understand, and at last we were divorced.

Mother had one brother living--Uncle Charles--who had moved a year ago to Santa Rosa, California. I went to visit his family, taking May and Armond, and leaving

four-year-old Clarence with Mother. I had been through so much sorrow I felt like an old woman although I was only thirty-four. This was in 1875. The Union Pacific Railroad was then a great attraction and many travelers were journeying back and forth to Philadelphia for the big Centennial.

We remained in California for a year during which time Uncle Charles died. Then mother was grandfather's only remaining child. Sometimes I dreamed that John had come for us and had brought our baby and we were going to live in California. But.....it was only a dream. Mother finally wrote that John had been married to Martha Cox and she wanted us to come home.

The next three years can be passed over quickly. Of course you realize now that Martha Cox was your mother. Charley was fourteen months older than you. Your father wrote to May occasionally so we had kept in touch with him.

A terrible tragedy occurred in the summer of 1879 in the vicinity of the Mound Farm. It was a hot, dry summer and the wells and streams ran dry. The cows roamed the woods seeking water, and some of them unfortunately ate a poisoned weed, called "snake-root". Many cows died throughout the neighborhood, and sad to relate, there were several deaths among those who had partaken of the milk or butter of the diseased cattle. Your father and mother were among those stricken--they died just one day apart--and there was a four-week-old baby girl. Your Aunt Nellie took this infant but it died a few days later.

This tragedy caused much excitement and consternation throughout the county. A Camp meeting was in progress nearby in a grove belonging to your grandfather, and it was broken up without ceremony while everyone hurried home.

Dick Hartmann, one of sister Annie's boys, had been staying at the Mound all summer and working for your father. He came home and related to us all the pathetic particulars. And he concluded:

"The children are with their grandfather, Mr. Cox. The little girl, 'Elsie', is about 15 months old. She

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does not walk yet--or talk. She can say 'Ma' and 'Pa' and 'Dick' and 'Molasses' She is a cute little monkey and has the prettiest curls you ever saw."

(He was talking about you, my dear. May changed your name to "Estelle").

For the first time, it was not mother but May who took things in hand. She was fifteen now, and she said:

"Mamma, we are going right out to Mr. Cox's and bring my little sister home. She will not be one bit of trouble to any of you. She is going to be mine!" She turned to her brothers, Armond and Clarence:

"You want her to come, don't you, boys?" They looked at each other and grinned.

It may seem strange that no-one thought to ask mother's opinion on this subject, and stranger still that she said nothing in opposition to May's decision.

I wrote to your grandfather immediately and asked that we might have you. There had never been anything but cordial relations between his family and mine. I received his letter suggesting that I come to see him. When I returned home I brought you with me, and no baby ever received a more affectionate welcome.

Mother, for all her brusk manner, was very fond of babies and she took you to her heart.

Did she, perhaps, regret any of the past? We must not judge her too severely. She suffered continuous trials and disappointments throughout her life. She seemed to have inherited from some ancestor the strong, flinty character that partook of the surrounding Vermont granite.

Mother died the following March (1880) and in October our dear boy, Armond, was called to his heavenly home.

You cannot remember either of them.

May took exclusive care of you, and worshipped you for nearly two years. Then--she, too, was called away--and you were left to fill her place--the daughter of John Messenger and granddaughter of Rebecca Piggott. You both looked like the Piggotts.

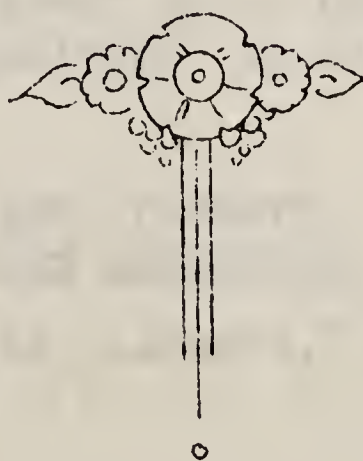
Now you know the story, my dear, and I am sure this knowledge will make our mutual love even more binding

than it has been in the past. You and Charley are now the only "Messengers" left in St. Clair County. The family has been known in America for over two hundred years."

* * * * *

("Ida Amelia" lived to be eighty-four. Sweet, generous, patient to the last--a devoted grandmother to "Stella Messenger's children.")

THE END



REFERENCES

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the foregoing historic narrative.

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